

SPORTS REVIEW

January 1981

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Wrestling



PEDRO MORALES'
CLAIM:
"THE WWF IS
OUT OF
CONTROL!"

LORD AL HAYS ---
TAMPERING WITH
HUMPERDINK'S
ARMY?

LARRY ZBYSZKO:
"WHY HAVE MY FRIENDS
TURNED AGAINST ME?"

NWA Jr.
Heavyweight Champion
Les Thornton:
GREATNESS
THE WORLD IGNORES

THE TRUTH BEHIND THE
APARTMENT WRESTLING
FREE-FOR-ALL



OFFICIAL WRESTLING RATINGS

WORLD WRESTLING FEDERATION

Champion: BOB BACKLUND

- 1—SGT. SLAUGHTER
- 2—HULK HOGAN
- 3—LARRY ZBYSZKO
- 4—PEDRO MORALES
- 5—THE HANGMAN
- 6—TONY ATLAS
- 7—PAT PATTERSON
- 8—TONY GAREA
- 9—RICK MARTEL
- 10—RICK MCGRAW

AMERICAN WRESTLING ASSOCIATION

Champion: VERNE GAGNE

- 1—NICK BOCKWINKEL
- 2—CRUSHER
- 3—CRUSHER BLACKWELL
- 4—MAD DOG VACHON
- 5—DINO BRAVO
- 6—JESSE VENTURA
- 7—GREG GAGNE
- 8—TITO SANTANA
- 9—JOHN STUDD
- 10—ADRIAN ADONIS

MOST POPULAR

- 1—ANDRE THE GIANT
- 2—BRUNO SAMMARTINO
- 3—DUSTY RHODES
- 4—RIC FLAIR
- 5—BOB BACKLUND
- 6—MR. WRESTLING II
- 7—IVAN PUTSKI
- 8—MIL MASCARAS
- 9—RICK STEAMBOAT
- 10—TED DIBIASE



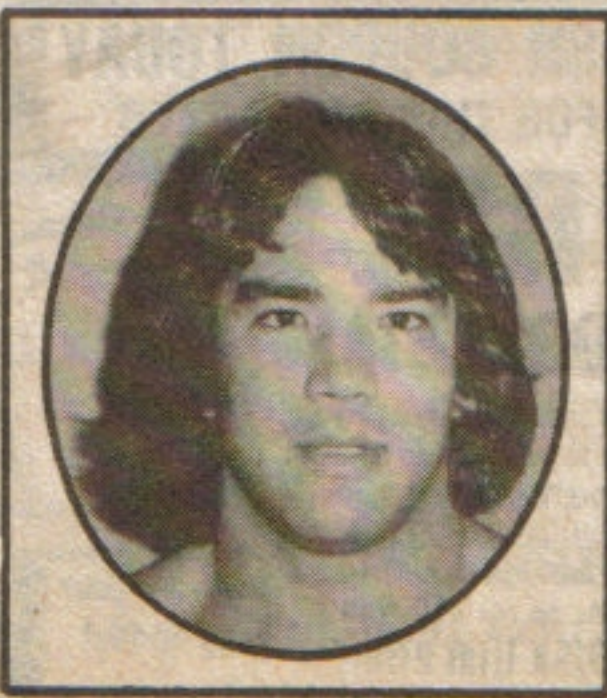
LARRY ZBYSZKO



JOHN STUDD



HUSSEIN ARAB



RICK STEAMBOAT

NATIONAL WRESTLING ALLIANCE

Champion: HARLEY RACE

- 1—GREG VALENTINE
- 2—DICK SLATER
- 3—DUSTY RHODES
- 4—DENNIS CONDRI
- 5—BABA THE GIANT
- 6—HUSSEIN ARAB
- 7—KEN PATERA
- 8—TED DIBIASE
- 9—JOHN TOLOS
- 10—GINO HERNANDEZ

TAG TEAMS

- 1—THE SAMOANS
- 2—RAY STEVENS & JIMMY SNUKA
- 3—JESSE VENTURA & ADRIAN ADONIS
- 4—MR. WRESTLING I & II
- 5—JERRY BRISCO & DICK MURDOCH
- 6—TERRY GORDY & BUDDY ROBERTS
- 7—THE ASSASSINS
- 8—KERRY VON ERICH & EL HALCON
- 9—RICK STEAMBOAT & JAY YOUNGBLOOD
- 10—BULLDOG BROWER & STAN STASIAK

MOST HATED

- 1—LARRY ZBYSZKO
- 2—KEN PATERA
- 3—ABDULLAH THE BUTCHER
- 4—MARK LEWIN
- 5—HULK HOGAN
- 6—NICK BOCKWINKEL
- 7—HARLEY RACE
- 8—GREG VALENTINE
- 9—KILLER BROOKS
- 10—BUDDY ROBERTS

THE TATTLER

CORRESPONDENTS

Larry Cohen

Chicago, Ill.

Warren Knowles

Seattle, Wash.

Allison Corey

New York, N.Y.

Andre Camus

Montreal, Canada

Buddy Ford

St. Louis, Mo.

Masanori Murikami

Tokyo, Japan

Andy Rankowski

Portland, Ore.

Myron Roth

Miami, Fla.

Clifford Douglas

Denver, Colo.

Kevin McCloud

Boston, Mass.

Leroy Jackson

Detroit, Mich.

Danny Torres

Los Angeles, Ca.

B.W. Foreman

Atlanta, Ga.

Paul Dreiser

Pittsburgh, Pa.

Carl Salinger

Richmond, Va.

Geoffrey York

Toronto, Canada

Charles F. Amberson

St. Paul, Minn.

Cedric Coleridge

Sydney, Australia

George Hawkins

Bangor, Me.

Ed Remington

Indianapolis, Ind.

Diane Goh

Honolulu, Hi.

James Washington

Houston, Tex.

John West

Baltimore, Md.

Ellen Larsen

Charlotte, N.C.

Butch Gallagher

San Francisco, Ca.

Virginia W. Sloan

Amarillo, Tex.

Randy Swift

Memphis, Tenn.

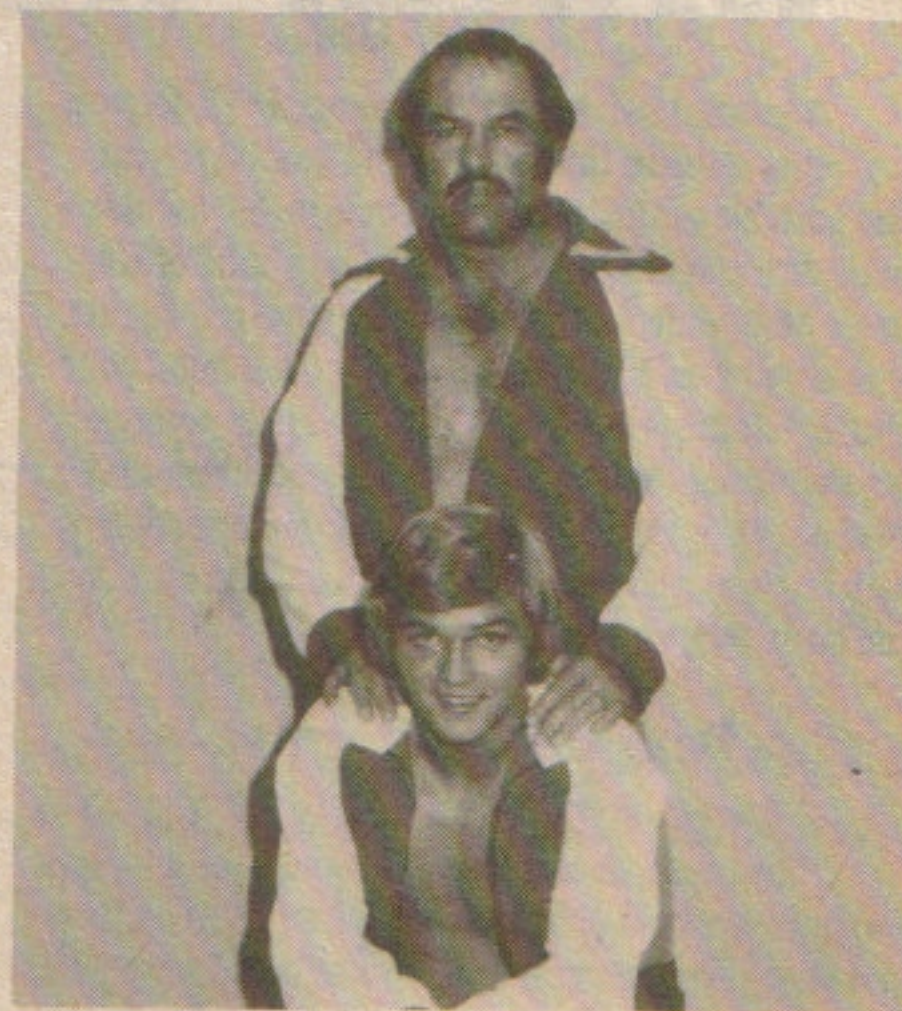
Barry Simon

Tampa, Fla.

MEMPHIS, TN—Long live the new Southern Heavyweight tag team champions, Tommy and Eddie Gilbert. Their recent victory over Killer Krupp and El Mongol ranks with the very best moments in Tennessee history.

Tommy and Eddie, father and son, worked as well together as any team this area has seen in a long, long time.

"Well, it's pretty easy working with your own father," said Eddie chuckling. "One



TOMMY & EDDIE GILBERT

thing you never have to worry about is your partner attacking you from behind."

"I like working with someone who's got talent obviously

(Continued on page 48)

Never before in this history of wrestling journalism have so many respected reporters been involved in so important a venture. The best wrestling correspondents from all over the world have been enlisted to report on the news behind the news. Every wrestling fan must consider this the most important column he can read!

The Inquiring Reporter

No one knows wrestling better than the fans.

Because of this, we're now giving these experts a forum for their views and opinions. Each month, we'll ask a controversial question and have the fans answer—no matter what those answers might be!

THE QUESTION:

"If you could change one rule in wrestling, which one would it be?"

THE ANSWERS:

Ali Durrell, Philadelphia, PA: "I think a title should change hands on a disqualification. As it is now, the rule favors the champions too much. Whenever they get in trouble, they get themselves disqualified and keep their titles. For whatever reasons, the winner of the match should be champion. I think that would make championship matches much better."

Jacqueline Norton, Rome, GA: "I'd like to see the piledriver made legal again. I never thought it was all that dangerous. I think it's one of the most exciting maneuvers to see. Heck, there are a lot more dangerous maneuvers than the piledriver that are still legal."

Cullen Dankworth, Amarillo, TX: "That's easy. I don't think it's right that a wrestler should lose a match just because he throws his opponent over the top rope. For the life of me, I can't see what's so bad about that. They let more dangerous things happen inside the



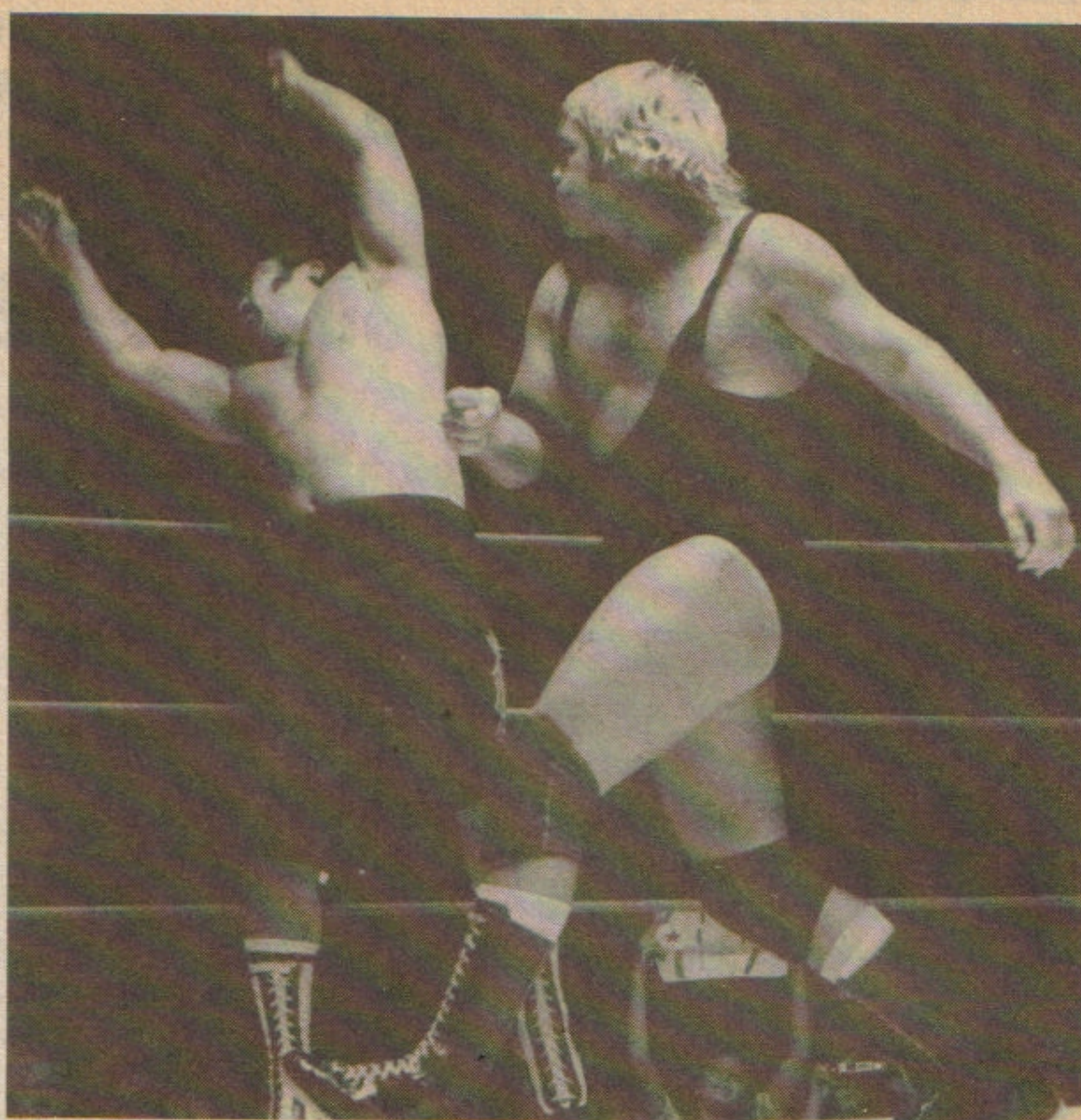
Blackjack Lanza is disqualified for throwing Terry Funk over the top rope. Reader Cullen Dankworth does not think such a maneuver is dangerous enough to warrant a disqualification.

ring. Also, I get a kick out of seeing some guy get hurled over the ropes. Even better, I like seeing them mix it up outside the ring."

Gillian Rogers, Boston, MA: "I

think the nervehold should be banned. They're too dangerous. Some people never recover. Others are in pain for the rest of their lives.

(Continued on page 48)



Keirn sends Mr. Saito reeling with a powerful right cross (above). Steve came up just short in his bid to capture the NWA title from Harley Race (below). Keirn showed remarkable courage in his match with Baron Von Raschke and captured the Georgia championship.

THE CELEBRATION IS still going on in the Georgia wrestling community. People are happier than they've been in months. And the man responsible is Steve Keirn, Wrestler of the Month.

Though his reign was cut short after a controversial loss to Dennis Condrey, we salute Keirn for having the courage and skills needed to take the Georgia Heavyweight championship from the terrible Baron Von Raschke. Most fans feared Baron had a stranglehold on the belt. The vicious rulebreaker would rule with an iron hand, making the Georgia title one decent wrestlers would never try to win.

It was a remarkable act of

bravery for Steve to challenge Von Raschke so early in his reign. Most people warned him against it. They argued there'd be plenty of time for Steve to make his challenge. The "smart" wrestlers were waiting to see what strategies Baron would use to defend his title.

The day he signed for the bout, Steve told his friends, "It's important for the sport that Von Raschke is challenged fast. We have to show we're not afraid of him. Even if I lose, it'll prove to Von Raschke that he's in for an ordeal. No moment of his reign should be an easy one."

Still, there were friends who begged Steve to let others do the challenging. They feared Von

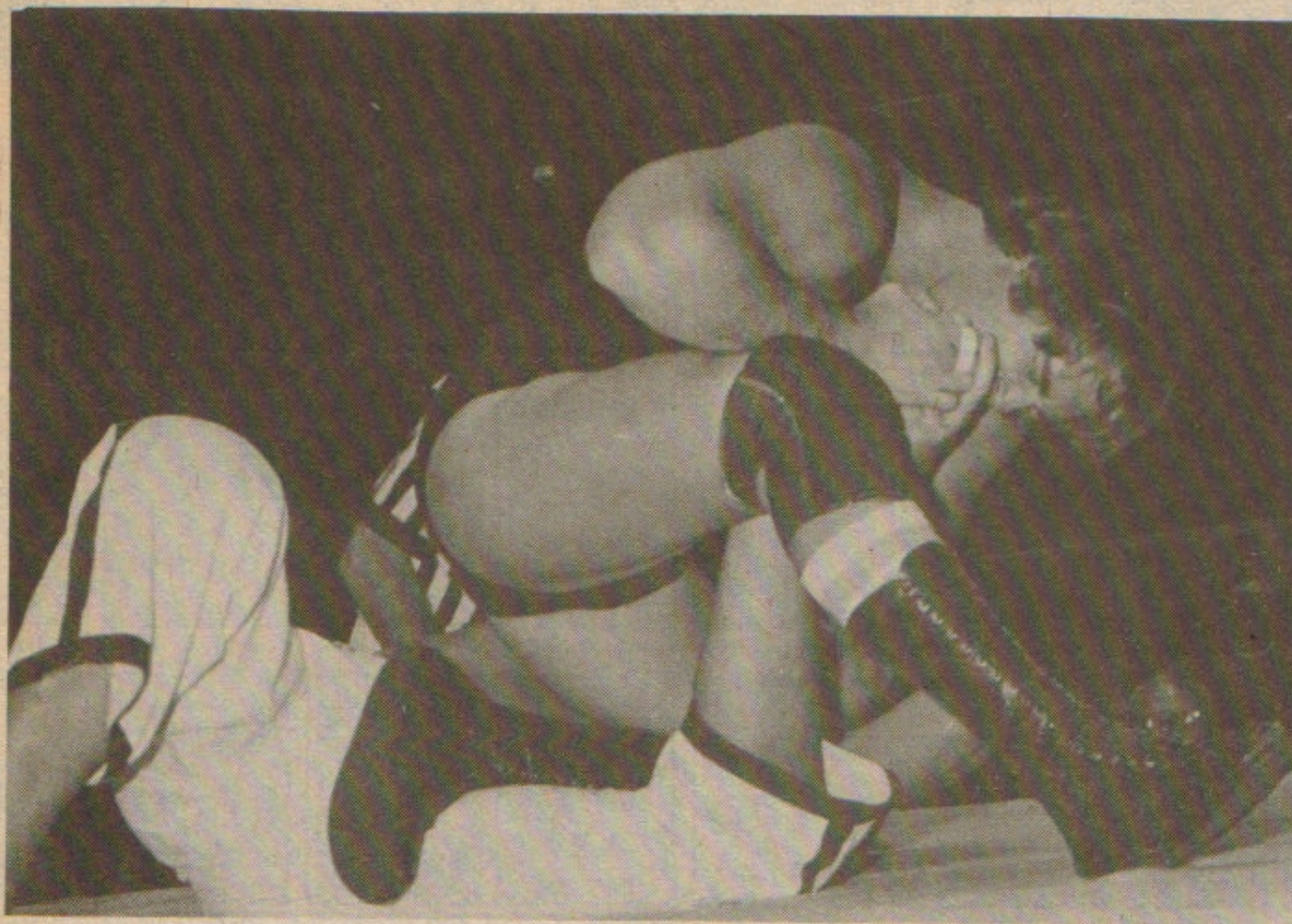
(Continued on page 18)



Every month, the editors of **SPORTS REVIEW WRESTLING** search the globe to find the one man whose achievements have surpassed those of all other wrestlers. Sometimes the selection may shock you. Other times you will be very pleased by the selection. But you will always agree our choice deserves to be "Wrestler of the Month!"

WRESTLER OF THE MONTH

(Continued from Page 15)



Keirn has the ability to mix a brilliant scientific style with a roughhouse brand of wrestling, depending on what the situation calls for. In spite of his loss to Dennis Condrey, Steve gained quite a bit from his short title reign.

Raschke would want to make an example of the first challengers.

"Then," Steve reasoned, "we have to show he can't do as he wants. Even if he has the belt, he won't be able to get away with his animal tactics. He may own the title, but I won't let him disgrace it."

Of course, Von Raschke was intent to prove Steve wrong. Rumors from the gym told of new and horrible maneuvers. A veteran rulebreaker watched in awe, then said, "Even I wouldn't do things like that. Those moves are meant to cripple. Winning has nothing to do with these maneuvers. They won't help you pin an opponent. They're only good for breaking limbs."

It didn't take long for Steve to learn of these maneuvers. Again, friends begged him to pull out of the match. Again, Steve told them he had no choice. "If you're a professional wrestler," he vowed, "you owe the sport. I owe the sport this."

As everyone knows, Steve did the impossible. It was a brutal



match, terrifying at times. Steve, whose friends only hoped wouldn't get hurt, wound up the winner. Von Raschke went down to ignominious defeat. Rulebreakers all over the world saw this and realized they could never control wrestling. There would always be a Steve Keirn to defend the sport's honor.

Later, Steve was characteristically modest about his success.

"I was lucky," he said, "Von Raschke wasn't at his best. Also, I think he was too intent on injuring me. He got reckless and careless. It was as if he forget what would happen if he lost. He was so



interested to show the world what he'd do to challengers, he forgot to win the match. Now he's a challenger himself.

"Baron learned what happens to a man who puts himself above the sport. He assumed there was no way he could lose, so why not take chances? He learned why not to take chances.

"I feel very lucky. And very happy."

As Steve talked, his fingers kept running along the title belt. It was as if he couldn't quite believe the belt belonged to him. For all his maturity and integrity, there's a lot of little boy in Steve. The look in his eyes reminded people of a kid at his first Christmas.

Steve Keirn risked his career over a matter of honor. No one made him do it. It was just something he felt had to be done. The fates rewarded him with the Georgia title, the respect of his profession, and a substantial boost to his career.

Every so often, nice guys finish first. □

TOP WRESTLER

YOUR QUESTION

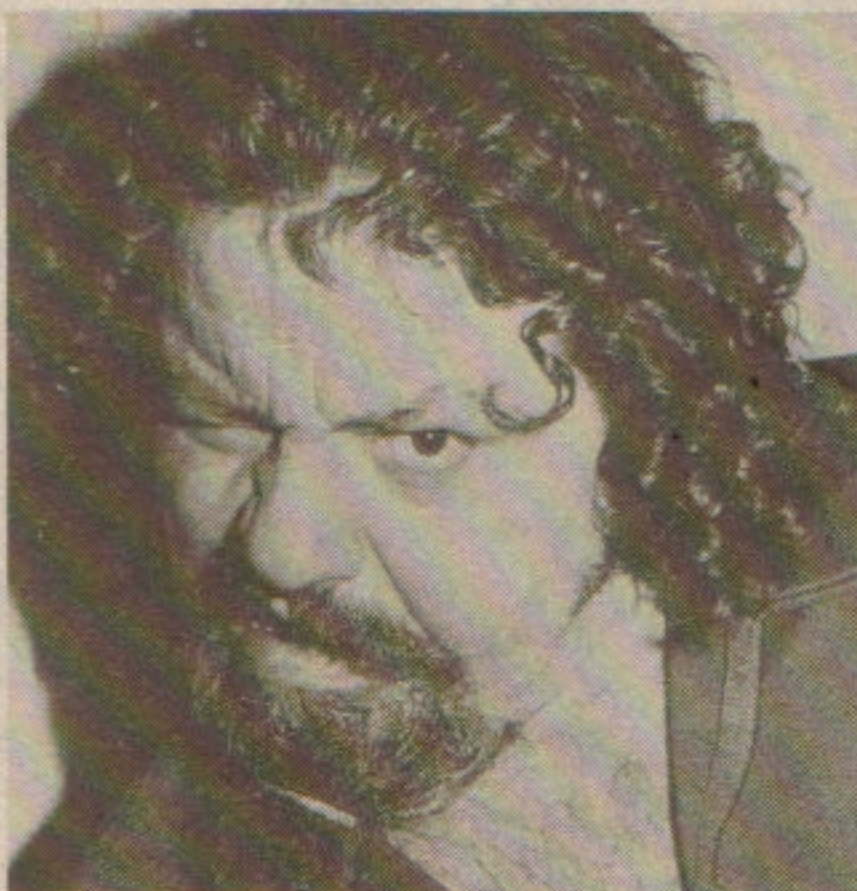
Do you have a question which concerns all of wrestling? Each month in **SPORTS REVIEW WRESTLING**, the sport's top superstars will answer a question sent in by a reader. If you wish to have your question answered by the wrestlers, send it to:

ASK THE STARS
Sports Review Wrestling
Box 48
Rockville Centre, N. Y.
11571

The "Question of the Month" is:

"Who should have the greater say over a wrestler's career, the manager or the wrestler?"

Submitted by:
Leslie Pearsay;
Waco, Texas



LOU ALBANO

"A manager should have complete, undivided, untampered, unaltered, unquestioned control over his wrestlers. My men should listen to every word I say. I know what's best for them. Let them do the wrestling and let me do the thinking. Obviously it's worked well for me so far."



NICK BOCKWINKEL

"There should be a partnership and a harmonious balance struck between a manager and his wrestler. In my case, Bobby Heenan and I think a lot and are able to understand the vast complexities of each other's minds. If there's a problem, we discuss it calmly and rationally instead of like the lower forms of life you read about."



DUSTY RHODES

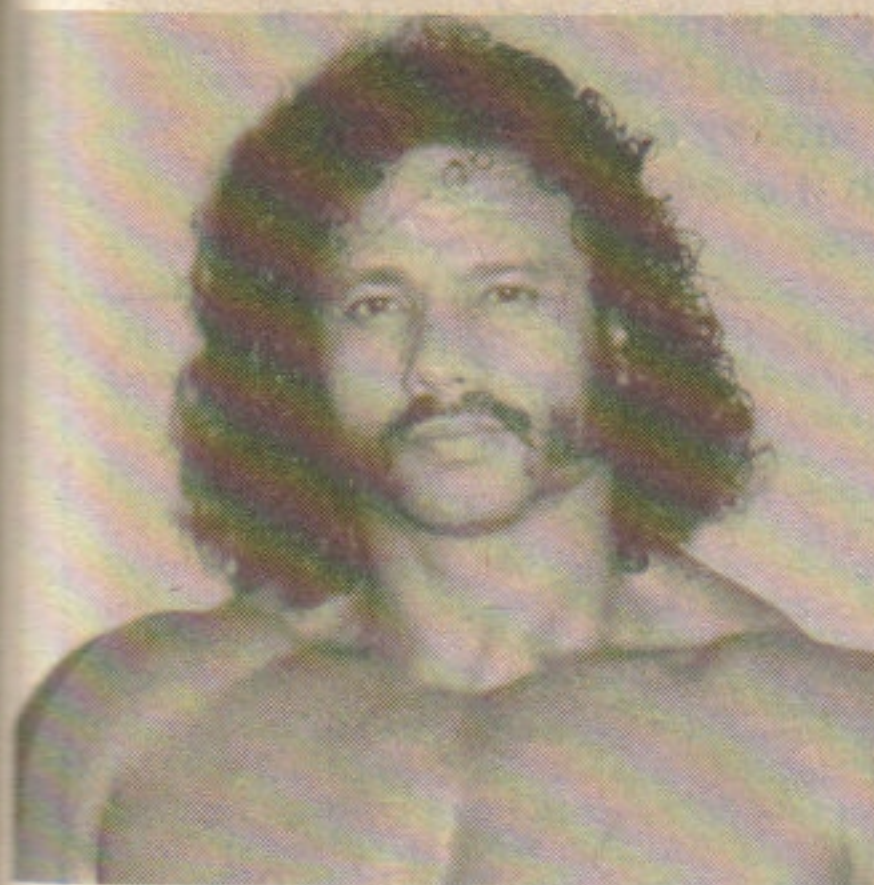
"Only person who should decide for a wrestler is the wrestler himself. I don't care what kinda advice you get, it's still up to you out there in the ring. And you can't be bothered with all sorts of words. You gotta do what comes naturally."



DAVID VON ERICH

"With a father like I have, I don't need any other kind of manager. I listen to Dad when he tells me things, but he respects me enough not to shove advice down my throat. I couldn't imagine having guidance from anyone other than my father. I really couldn't do it."

RS ANSWER OF THE MONTH



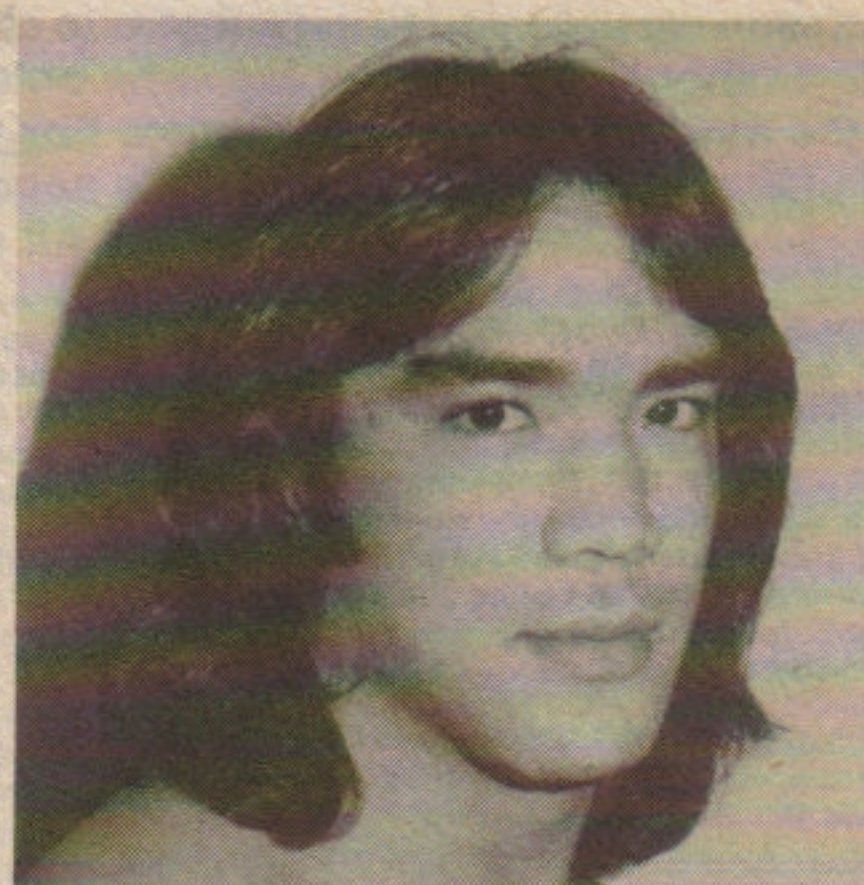
JIMMY SNUKA

"A good manager helps his wrestlers. Take Gene Anderson, our manager. Gene knows wrestling, very smart, very shrewd, very fair. I don't worry about taking advice from Gene because I know he's on my side. I know Gene wants to win as badly as I do, so there's never a problem."



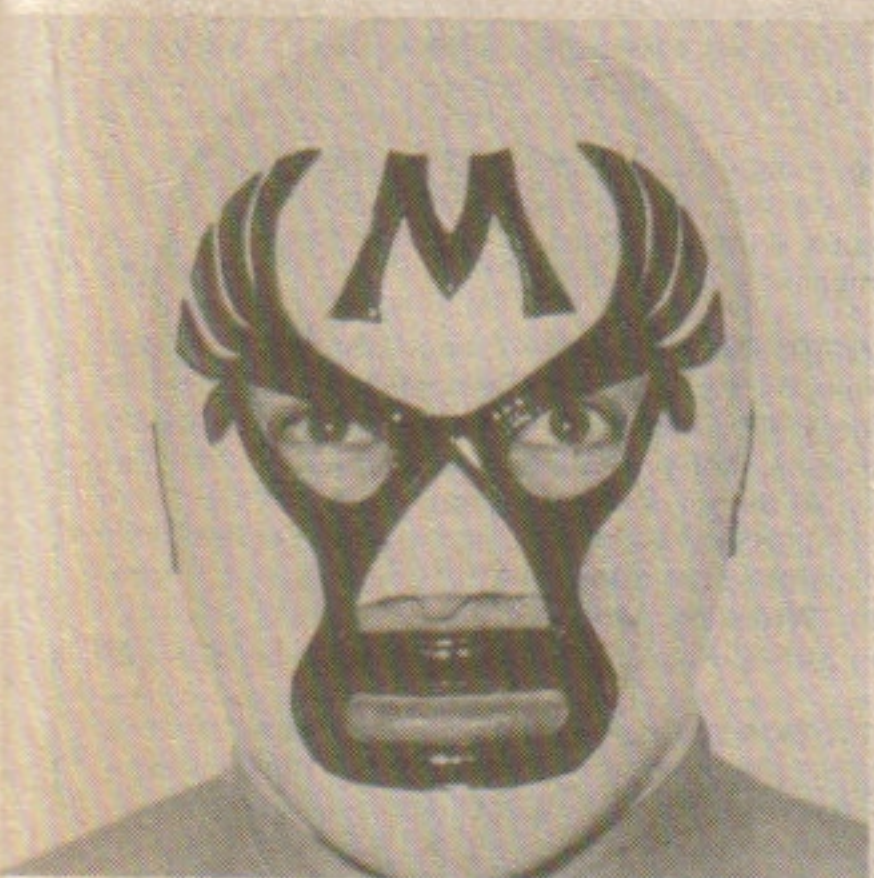
ARNOLD SKOALAND

"In most cases, a manager should concern himself solely with what happens in the ring and never interfere in a wrestler's personal life, unless asked. With me and Bob, we've become such good friends that we discuss personal matters all the time, as good friends do. But I'd never interfere in Bob's life away from the arena."



RICK STEAMBOAT

"I've never had a manager. Guess I never really saw a need for one. I've always prided myself on making all my own decisions. I think that's a lot healthier than depending on someone else to tell me what to do. Sure, I've solicited advice from people I respected, but I always made the final decision."



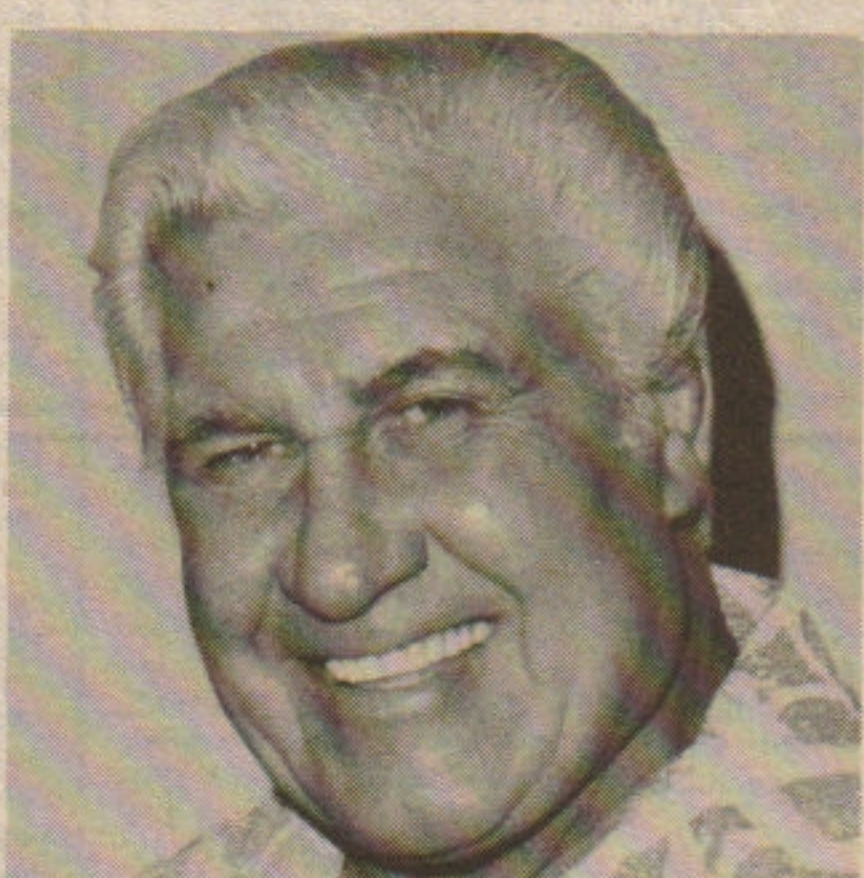
MIL MASCARAS

"You know, wrestling is a very personal, very intense affair. Your emotions and your instincts play a large role in determining your ring behavior. As well-intentioned as many managers may be, they truly cannot know or understand what is in a wrestler's mind and what must be done to win."



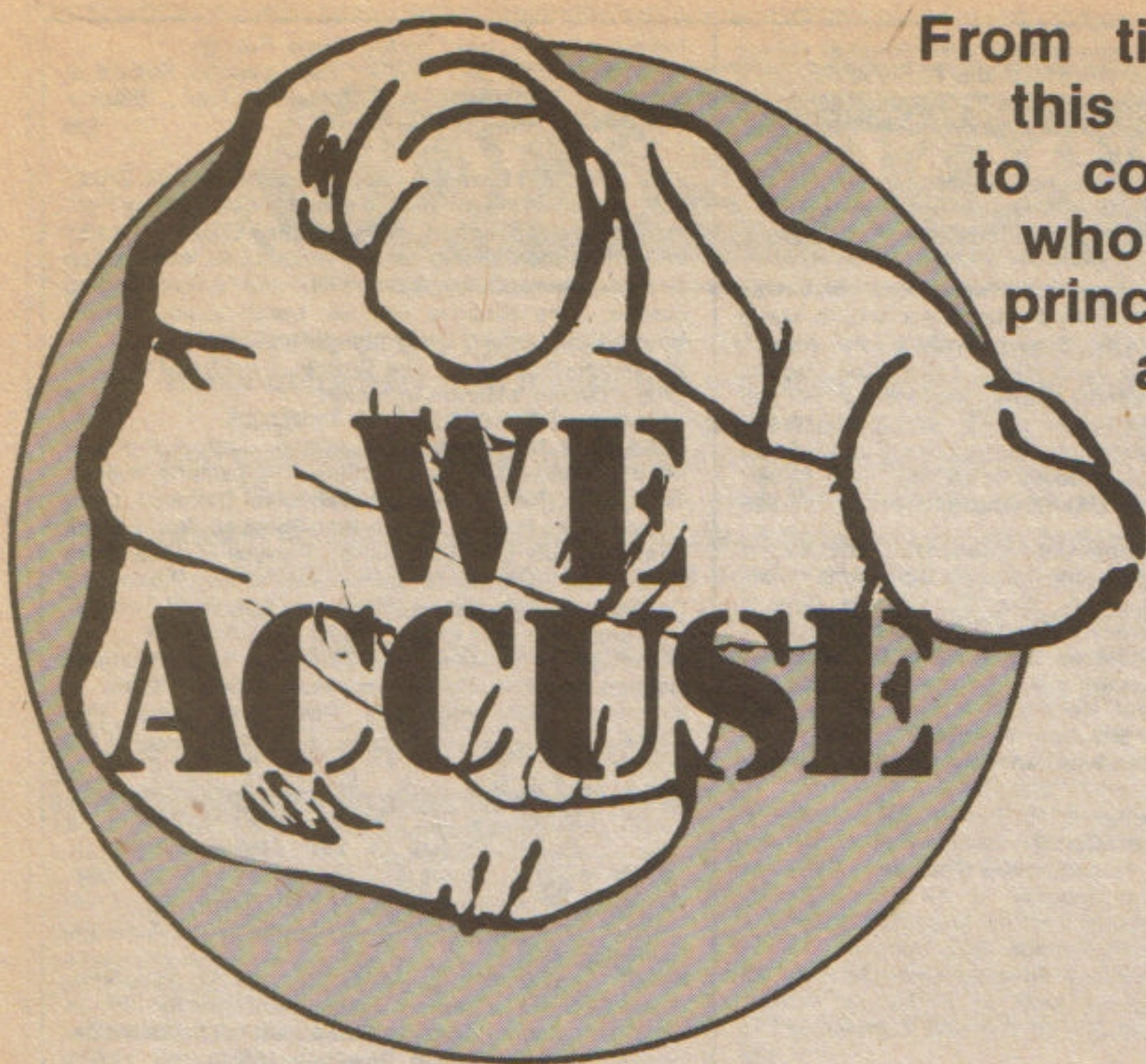
SIR OLIVER HUMPERDINK

"Why does a manager select a wrestler? Because he believes that man has the raw potential to win. But it's raw, not polished. That's the purpose of a manager, to shape this raw piece of meat into a champion and tell this creation what to do every step of the way."



FRED BLASSIE

"Where would a wrestler be without a manager, tell me, huh? A manager is a father, a brother, a friend, an advisor, a guy who lights a fire under a wrestler and makes him go that extra little step needed to smash his foe into smithereens. Wrestlers couldn't live without managers."



From time to time, the editors of this magazine find it necessary to condemn those in wrestling who would subvert the basic principles of decency, integrity, and honesty. Without such truths, our sport will die

THERE IS NO longer any time for excuses. Hulk Hogan has earned a title shot at Bob Backlund's WWF belt. Why hasn't he gotten one?

As we go to print, the WWF continues to ignore Hogan. They have had him wrestle top athletes, including Andre the Giant and Ivan Putski. Though we may disagree with Hogan's methods, we have to deal with results. The results say Hogan deserves a title shot.

When asked why Hogan hasn't gotten a shot, one official explained, "We've had many top challengers around lately. Hogan just has to wait his turn. We're not afraid to give him a shot. We're not even afraid of him becoming champion. Though to be honest with you, I think Backlund will take him with little trouble."

That's what the officials say. Their actions, however, tell a different story. From the beginning, they've given Hogan the toughest opponents, a grueling schedule, and still no title shot. If they argued that a rulebreaker doesn't deserve a title shot, we might be forced to agree. However, the record shows Backlund has

been wrestling nothing but rulebreakers.

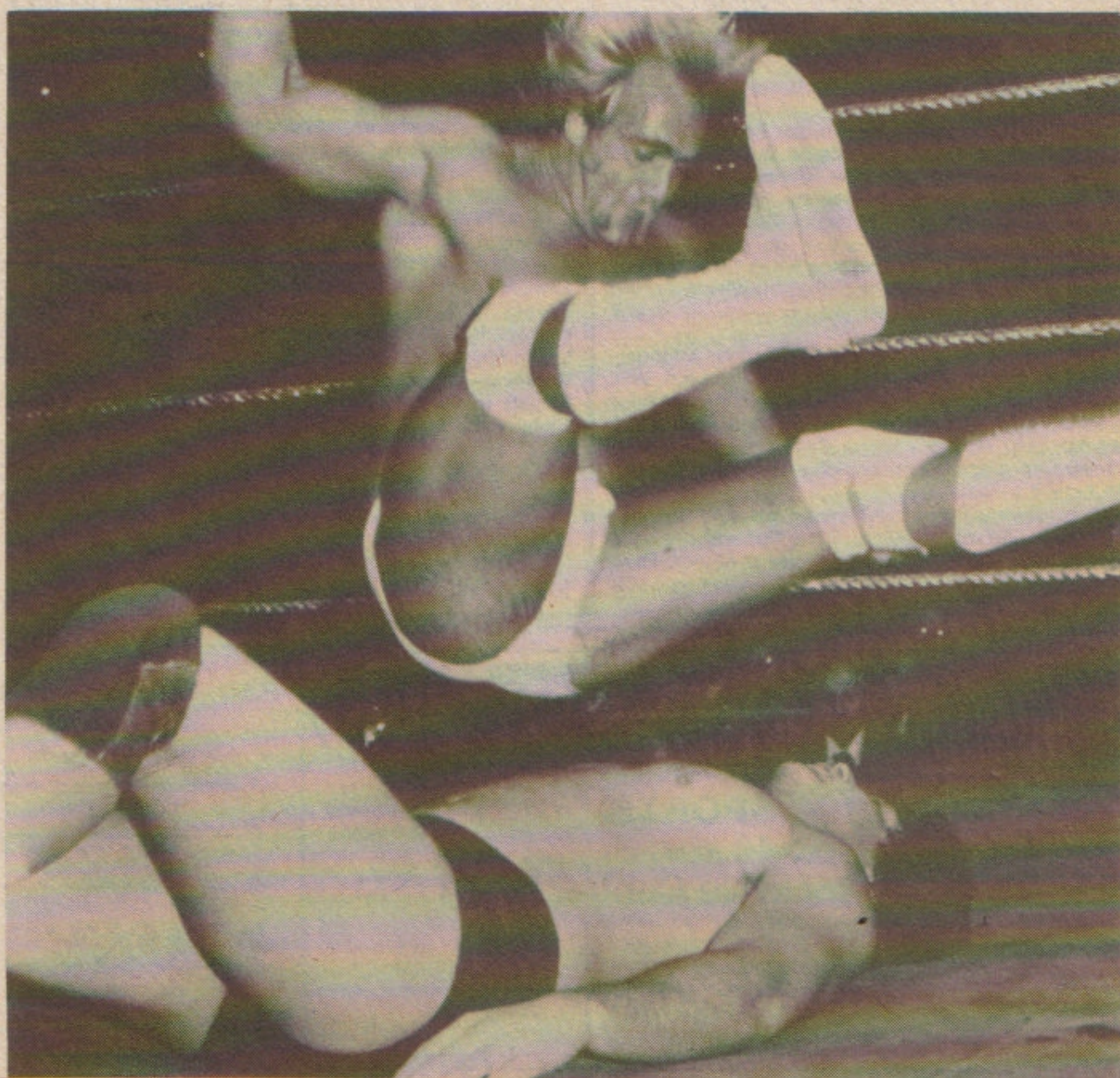
Are they protecting Backlund? Does he need protection? We don't think so. Even if he did, as champion he's not entitled to

protection. He must defend his belt against all legitimate contenders. No matter what you may think of Hogan personally, you have to admit he's a legitimate contender.

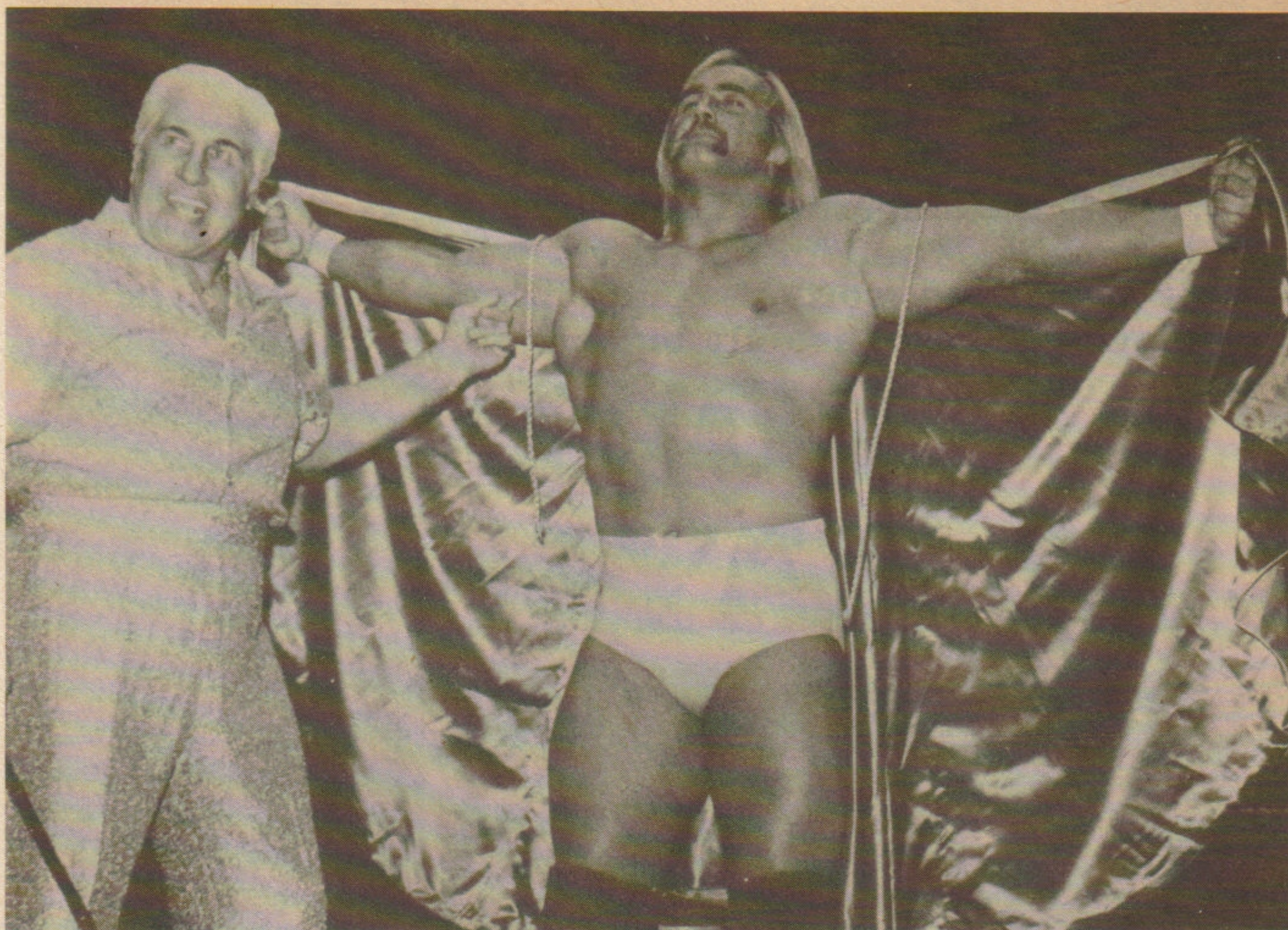
Backlund claims he has asked to wrestle Hogan.

"I know Hogan deserves a shot," Bob says, "and I want him to get one. It looks bad for the WWF if he doesn't. It also looks bad for me.

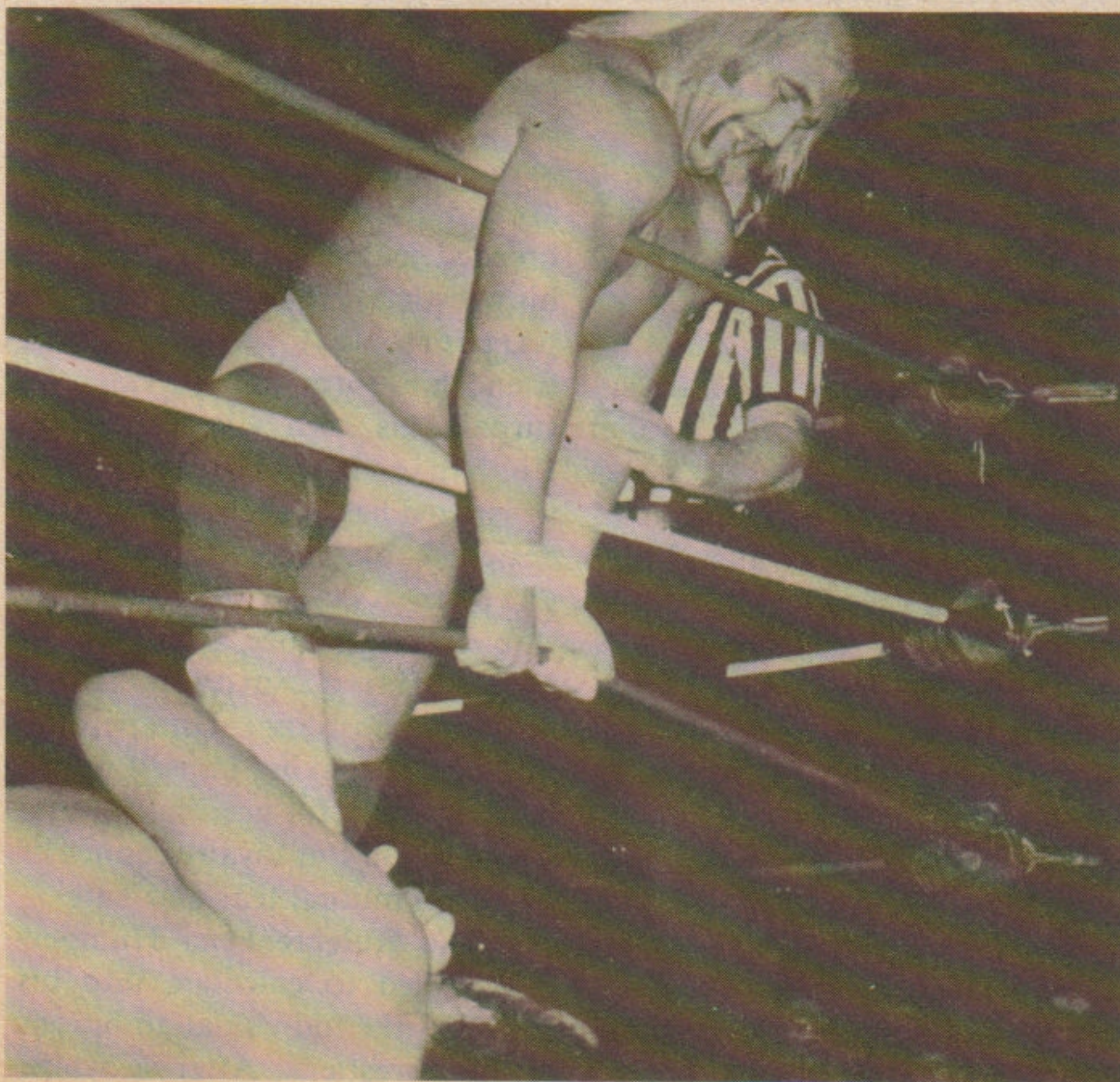
"I really don't know why he hasn't gotten a shot yet. Chances are he angered a high official and that guy won't let Hogan get a shot.



Hulk Hogan drops all his weight on Tito Santana. Manager Fred Blassie thought that an impressive showing against Santana would assure Hogan a title match.



Fred Blassie points to the man he feels should be ranked number one challenger in the WWF—Hulk Hogan (above). Hogan plants his big foot in Andre the Giant's throat and pulls on the ropes for extra leverage (below).



A lot of people want to pay Hogan back for things he's done to them.

"I respect him, but I'm not afraid of him. I've developed a number of strategies that could beat him. He's big, but there are ways to overcome that. I'll tell you, I'd rather be doing it than explaining it.

"I can request opponents, but I can't demand them. I wrestle who the officials tell me to. I hope they'll tell me to wrestle him soon. He deserves the shot."

As of this printing, the WWF says Hogan will get his shot eventually. They refuse to name a date. Many wrestlers have asked that Hogan get a shot. It looks bad for everybody when one man doesn't receive justice.

As for Hogan, he seems content to wait.

"Sooner or later," he believes, "they'll have to give me a shot. Right now, because they won't give me a shot, I'm an embarrassment. When they finally give me a shot, I'll be champion." □

Has Sir Oliver Humperdink finally found a formidable rival in the person of Lord Al Hays? Rumors abound in Florida that Hays has decided to challenge Humperdink's managerial supremacy once and for all. Oliver will not accept any sort of competition. Obviously, Florida is only big enough for one of them

LORD AL HAYS- TAMPERING WITH

PHOTOS BY BILL APTER



HUMPERDINK'S ARMY?



With Sir Oliver Humperdink (above) losing control of his wrestlers, will Lord Al Hays (top) become a major managerial force in Florida?

LIKE RATS DESERTING a sinking ship, the evil hordes of Sir Oliver Humperdink turn on their former mentor and assault his corpulent frame with vindictive glee.

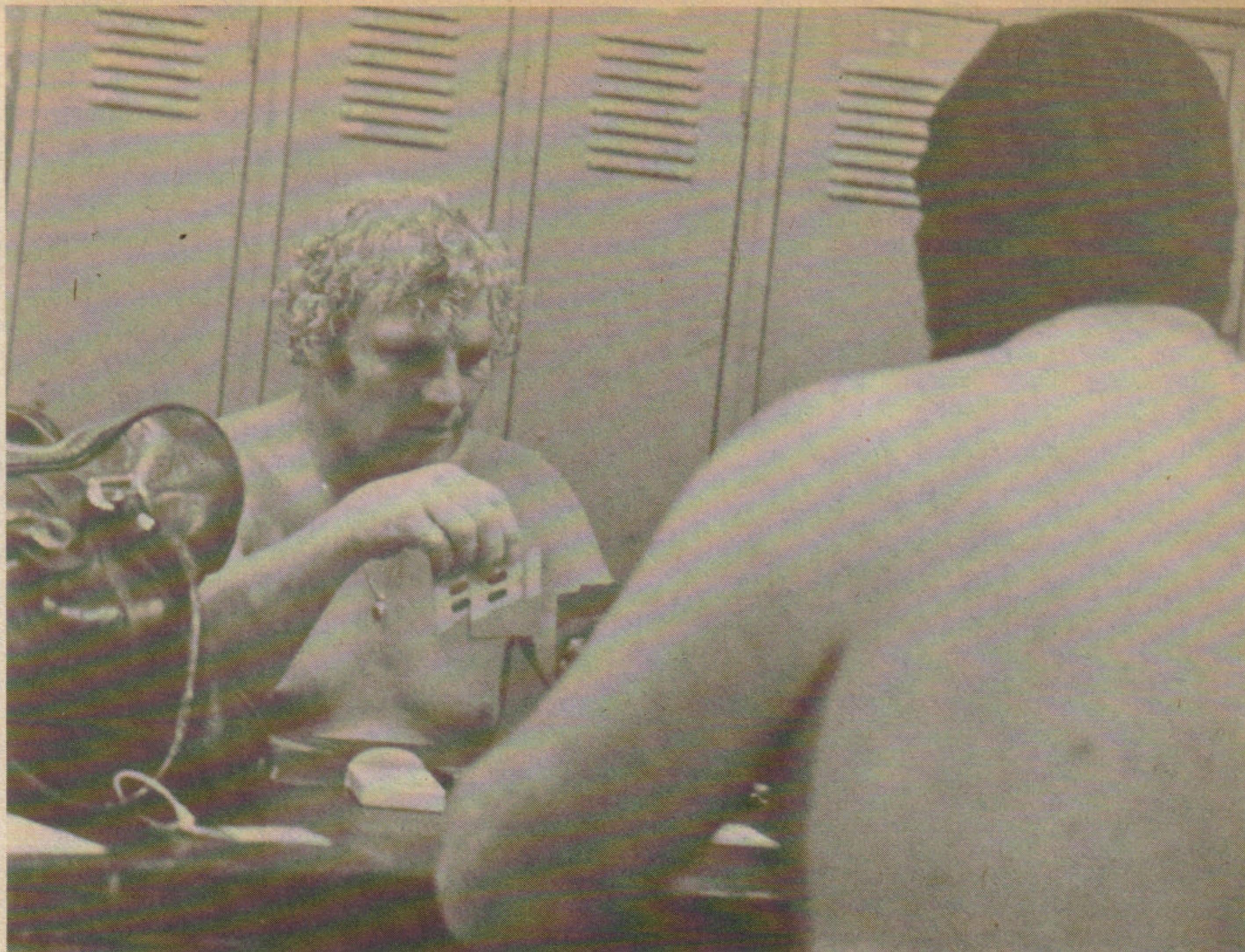
None of Humperdink's former wrestlers is immune from this contagious disease. From Nikolai Volkoff to Ivan Koloff, Florida rulebreakers are attacking Humperdink and seeking the waiting arms of newcomer Lord Al Hays.

Though often predicted, why did this happen? What led to Oliver Humperdink's startling decline from the very mountaintops of Florida wrestling?

- **Overambition:** Like all egotistical men, Sir Oliver Humperdink believed himself the heir to the Florida wrestling throne. Humperdink used and discarded men like day-old bread.

Once a man served Humperdink's purpose, the red-bearded manager tossed him aside. The only loyalty in the Humperdink stable revolved around the manager himself. He bred jealousy and fear among his wrestlers. He switched tag team partners lest any binding friendship form and threaten to surpass his own vile leadership. Periodically, Humperdink whispered lies to a selected wrestler designed to keep that wrestler suspicious of his fellow stablemates. Once the resentments flared into imminent physical hostility, Humperdink intervened, making himself out to be the wonderful peacemaker and friend to all. But loyalty cannot be based on mutual fear and hate.

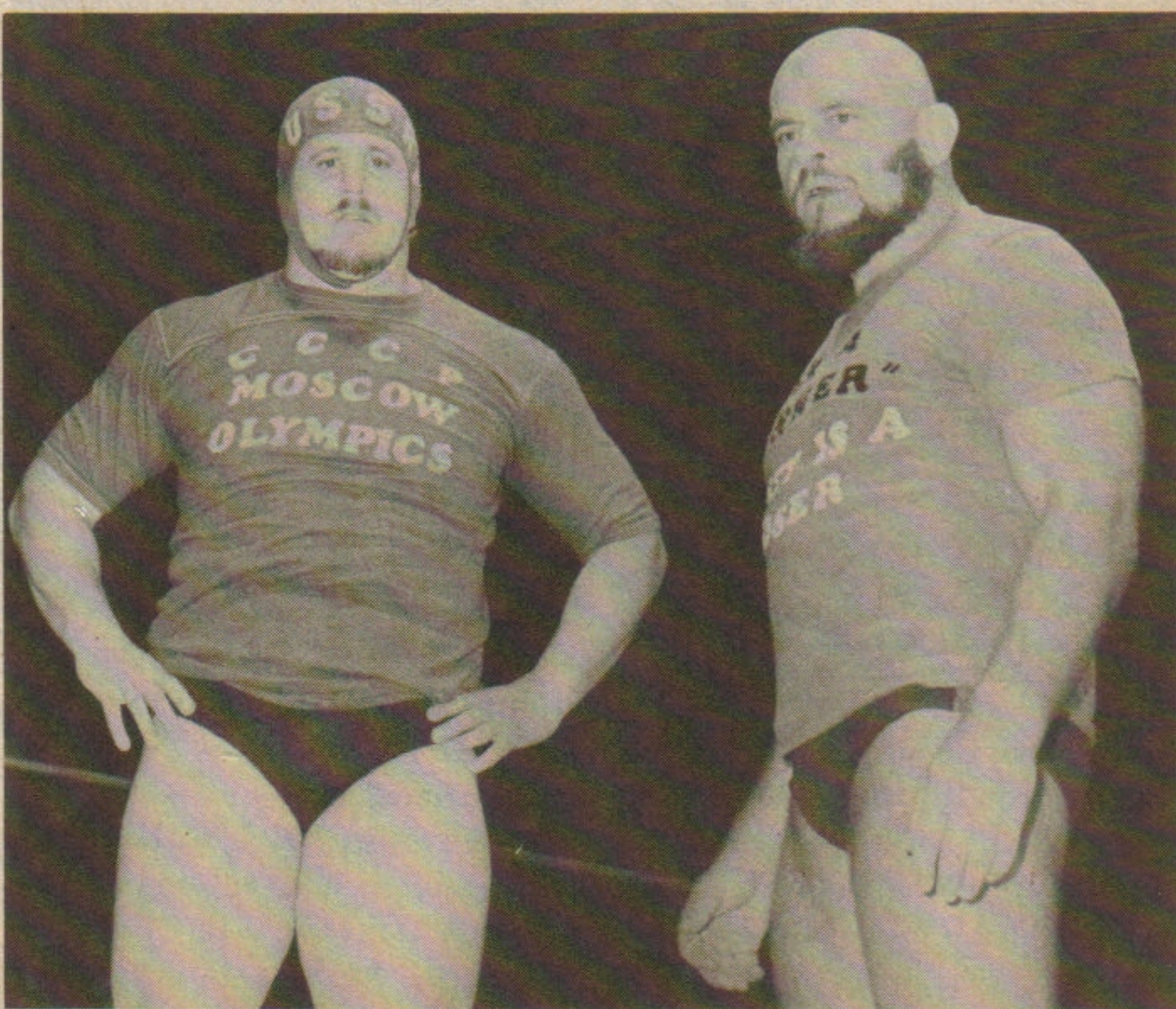
- **The Rulebreakers:** Humperdink failed to calculate into his equation the individual ambitions of his wrestlers. After a while,

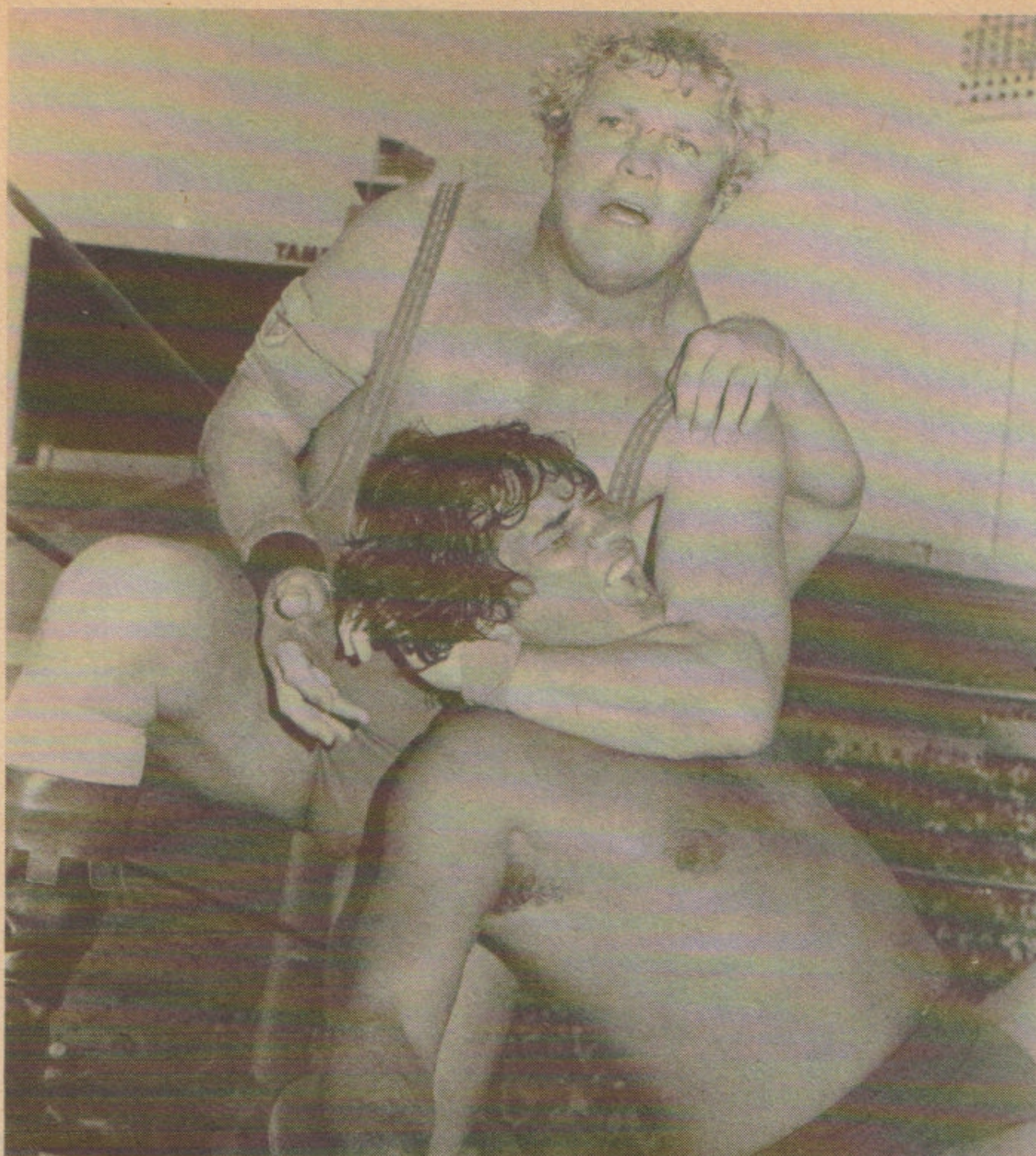


Humperdink believed all they lived for was to serve Humperdink's own aims. This was a grievous mistake. Precisely because Humperdink needed the meanest, most amoral men he could find, he was forced to select the ones who were the most disloyal. At no time did anyone truly think a Don Muraco or Ivan Koloff believed in pledges of loyalty to their "beloved" manager. The only master such men could serve would be themselves. Yet that sort of man is the only kind who would consider working for Humperdink. Thus the stable was doomed from the very beginning.

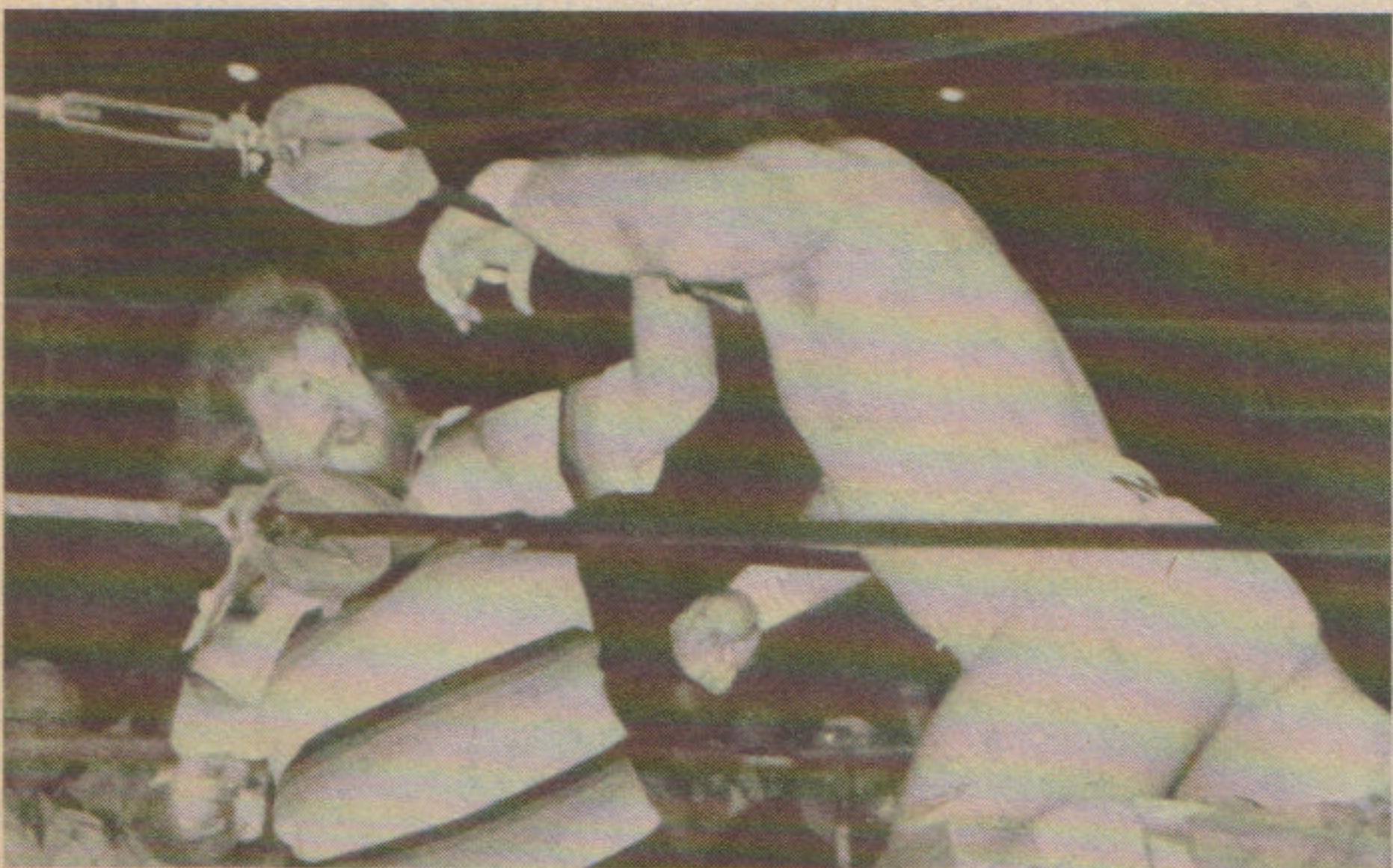
• **The Scientific Wrestlers:** Another serious Humperdink miscalculation was the growing opposition, in both size and numbers, of the state's scientific wrestlers. Obviously Humperdink thought sheer

It didn't take Hays long to befriend the top Florida rulebreakers. Hays passes the time with Super Destroyer in the dressing room (above). Securing the contracts of Nikolai Volkoff and Ivan Koloff (below) would be a major coup for Hays.





Hays showcased his wrestling philosophy to the area rulebreakers during a match against Jerry Brisco at Tampa Stadium (above). As Super Destroyer distracts the referee in the ring, Humperdink hits Manny Fernandez outside (below).



intimidation could force men like Buggy McGraw and Dusty Rhodes out of his path. But exactly such intimidation only fortified their collective resolve to rid Florida of Humperdink. On an almost daily basis, the legions of Florida scientific wrestlers sworn to

Humperdink's destruction grew. After a while, they simply overwhelmed him

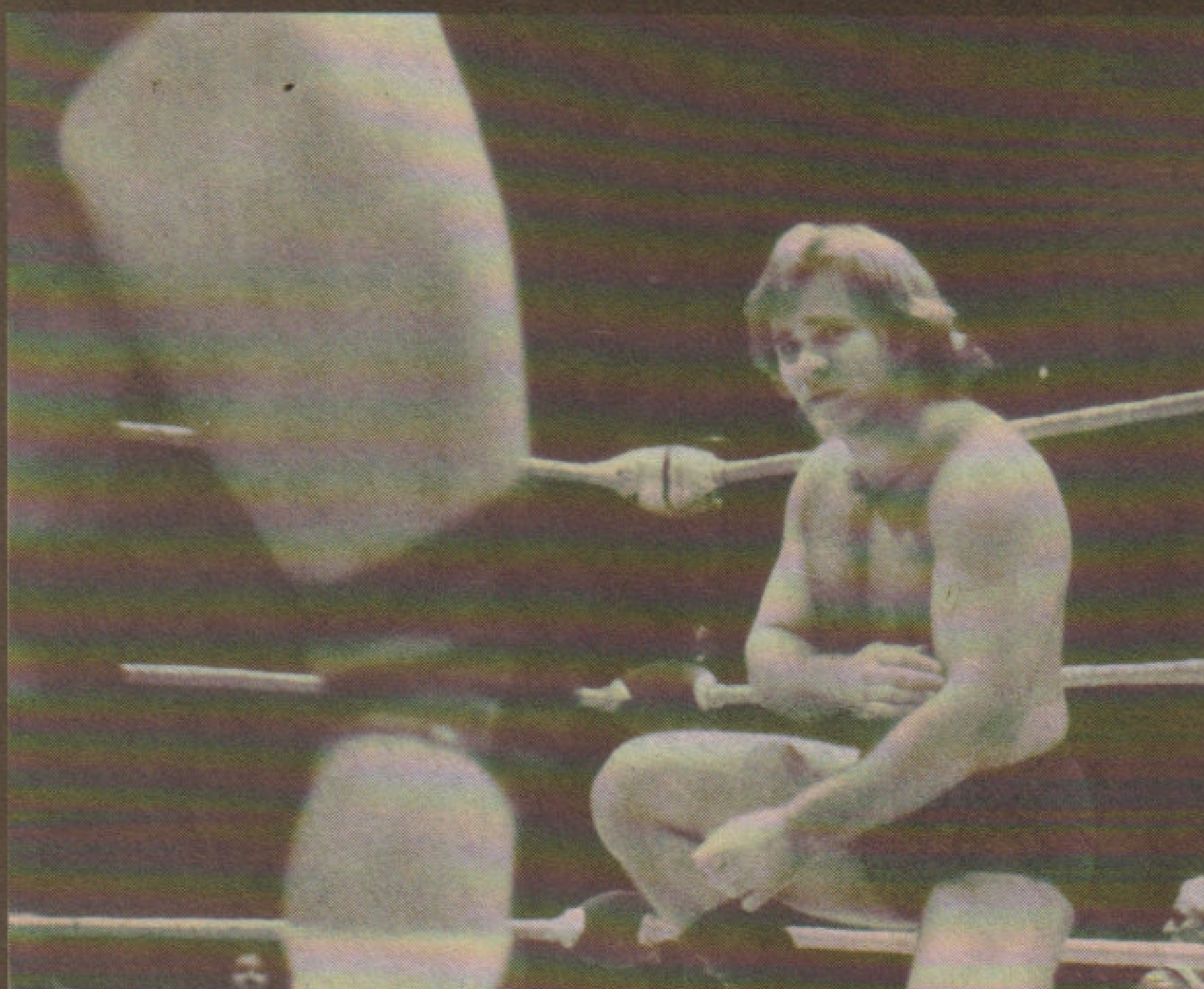
• **Patriotism:** Again, Humperdink underestimated the rising nationalism within Florida wrestling circles. Boasting of Koloff and Volkoff only

intensified fears of Florida being overrun with dastardly foreign wrestlers. Men like Bobo Brazil and Buggy McGraw, swiftly signed up to fight back once the Soviet menace went out of control. More so, Humperdink solidified fan disapproval in a manner never witnessed before.

• **Competition:** Humperdink sailed along never believing any manager could challenge his supremacy. Yet Humperdink mistakenly ignored Lord Al Hays. For a time, Humperdink shot down Hays' considerable talents. When Hays signed Bobby Jagers as his first Florida rulebreaker, Humperdink sneered and said Jagers wasn't good enough to wrestle for him. But Jagers was just the start. Now Humperdink watches as his army starts to crumble. Hays is a shrewd man. While in the AWA, he managed the likes of Super Destroyer III and Crusher Blackwell. Basically Hays gravitated toward the good guys as a result of a violent feud with Bobby Heenan. When Hays came into Florida, few, including Humperdink, suspected he would decide to manage rulebreakers. But Hays has chipped away at Humperdink's army. It seems just a matter of time before it is Lord Al Hays who is the number one Florida rulebreaking manager.

• **Conclusion:** If this were simply an analysis of one man's rise and fall from power, the conclusion could end on a somewhat happy note. But this conclusion must take into account the rise of Lord Al Hays. The need for a Sir Oliver Humperdink doesn't die with his demise, as witness the rise of Hays. There will always be a need for such a man, a man determined to win at any cost, willing to exploit and misuse young wrestlers for his own sadistic ambitions. Whether he be named Hays or Humperdink or whatever, it is quite doubtful Florida fans have seen the last of such a vile army. □

LARRY ZBYSZKO:



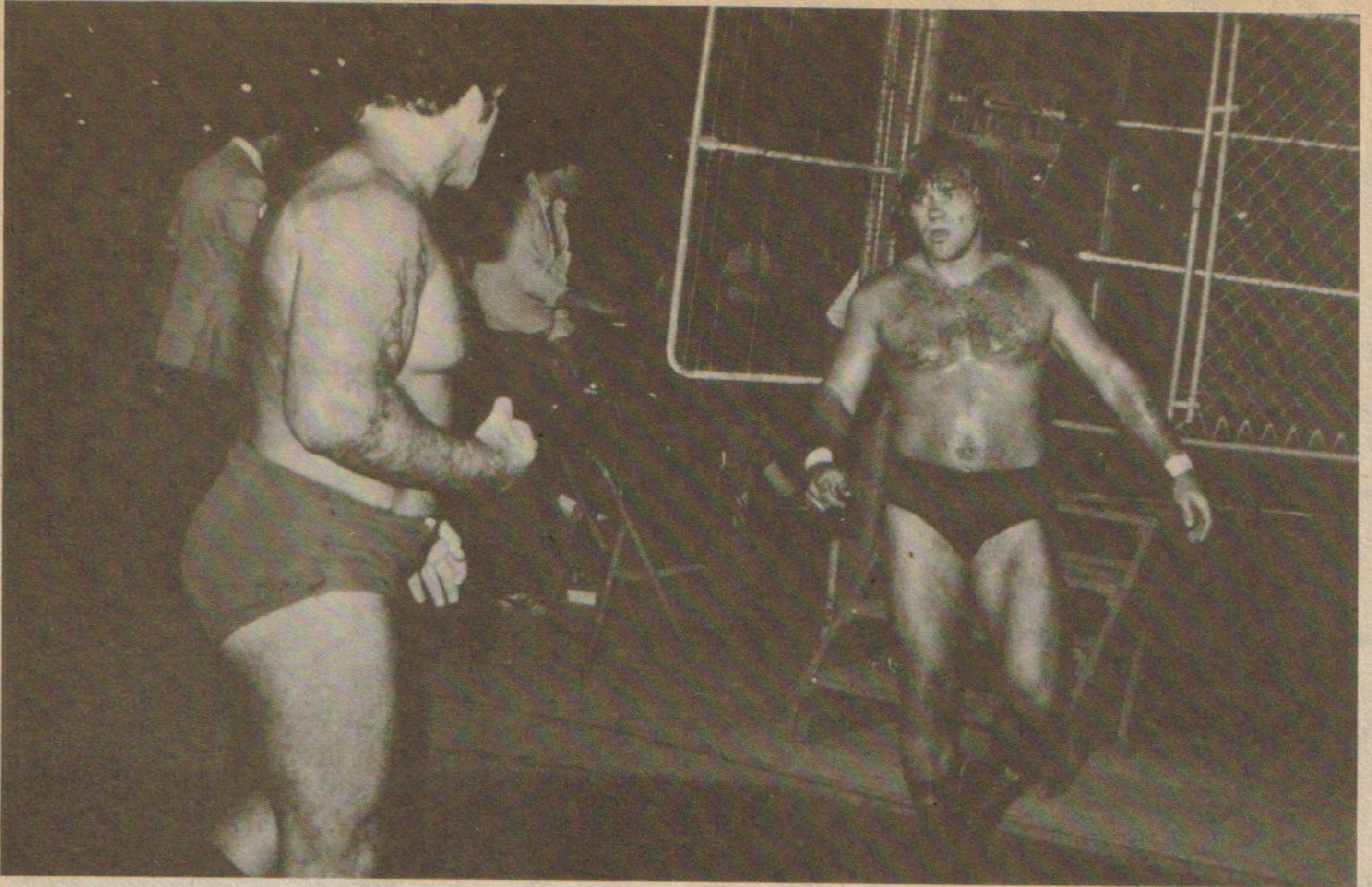
KIELBASA FRIED and gusted smoke throughout the small kitchen. A pot of Polish pea soup spewed delectable fumes across the stove. Larry Zbyszko took out a huge bowl of salad and brought it to the small table, gesturing for his guests to take any of the six high-backed chairs.

"Don't get much company nowadays," he said, shrugging. Zbyszko hurried about. He took out plates from the closet and set the table for six. "Always set for six, never know when some friends will show up, gotta be prepared."

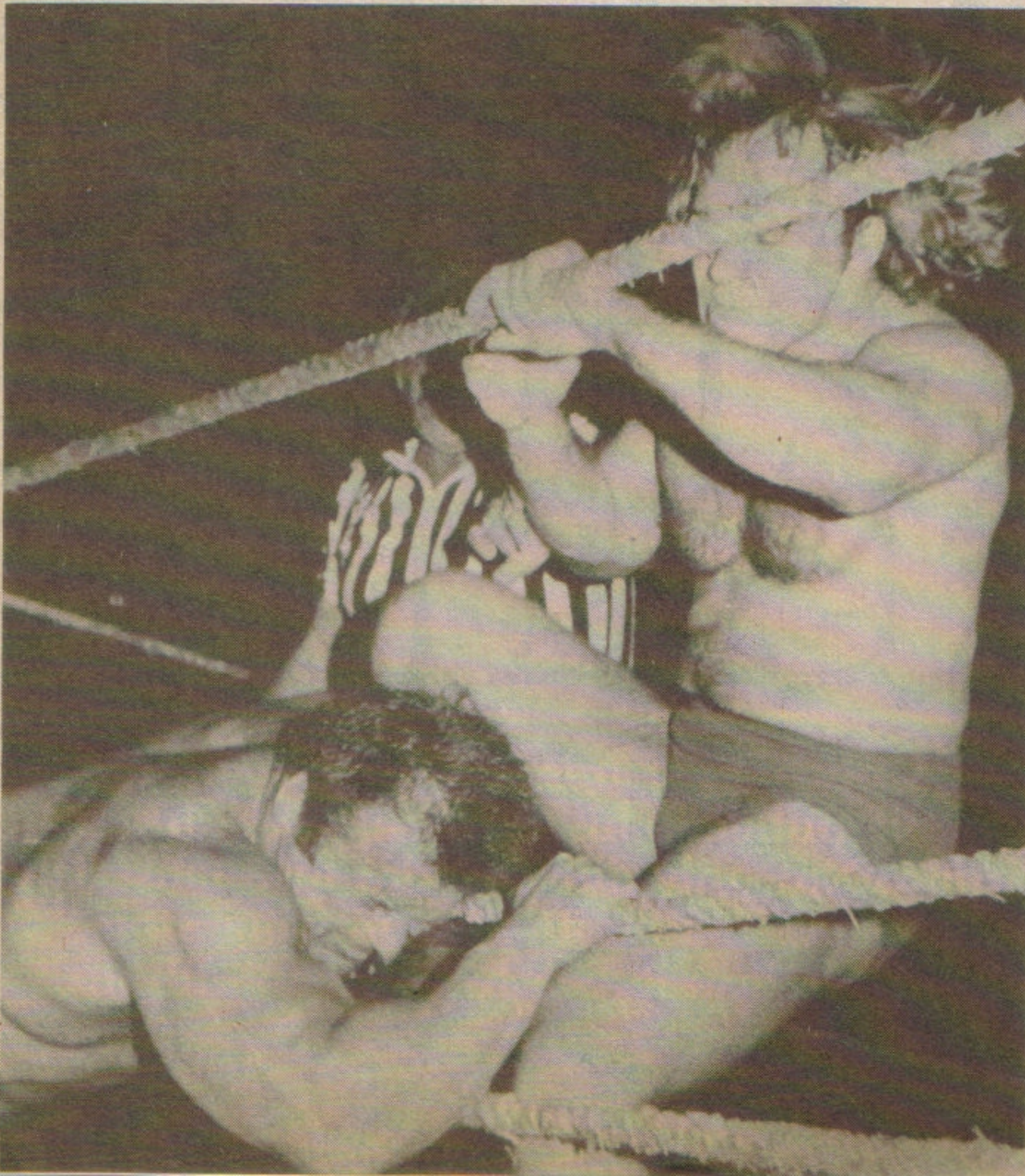
Zbyszko carefully placed the silverware down and deposited coasters atop the white

"WHY HAVE MY FRIENDS TURNED AGAINST ME?"

Truly, Larry Zbyszko is a portrait of tragedy. He encounters sustained criticism from the public in his stance against former friend Bruno Sammartino. Not only did Zbyszko lose fans, it now appears he has lost his friends. In this moving story, Zbyszko bares his soul and tells how it feels to be a man without a friend



Victorious Bruno Sammartino greets Zbyszko with a clenched fist following their Shea Stadium cage match (above). Whereas not long ago Zbyszko and Ivan Putski dined together, now Larry plants a knee in Ivan's temple (below).



tablecloth.

"Hate stains," Zbyszko muttered, disappearing into the kitchen and returning with salt and pepper. "Now my soup usually doesn't need seasoning, but, well, you add what you want."

Larry opened the 1978 bottle of Chianti Classico and poured the guest a drop, urging with animated hand gestures to sip. The guest remarked about the exquisite bouquet and Zbyszko grinned proudly.

"Oh, I have a bunch of these bottles, never know, bought a case about nine months ago. I used to have a lot of people over now, well, don't seem to go through it the way I once did." His brown eyes softened sadly and his entire frame stooped. Suddenly he stiffened and poured out six glasses.

"Had a terrific party a year ago," said Zbyszko as he ladled out soup into each of the six bowls. "Sammartino was here, he brought some really wonderful cannoli. Putski was

over and we had a little disagreement over different ways to prepare kielbasa." Zbyszko chuckled. "Backlund and Arnie Skoaland came a little late, but they made up for it by bringing over really scrumptious cole slaw. Heck, I'm a sucker for good slaw. Then me and Tony Garea had a lengthy game of chess with everyone rooting us on. Whole party lasted well past midnight, and we celebrated by watching *The Twilight Zone*. By that time it was just me and Garea."

Zbyszko paused, the spoon a half-inch from his mouth. He sighed wearily and slurped. Glancing up, Zbyszko searched his guest's reaction to the soup.

"Good?" Zbyszko asked hopefully. His guest nodded dreamily and Zbyszko grinned. "Believe it or not, Dominic DeNucci gave me this recipe. This is the best Polish pea soup I've ever had. Yeah, one afternoon, Dom came over and the two of us made up a huge pot of

pea soup while watching the football game. Spent a few hours perfecting it, sipping on a little red wine," Zbyszko chuckled. "Yeah, that was pretty good time.

"Heck, that was pretty good." Zbyszko stared at the other four untouched soups. Sighing, he rose and removed them from the plate, mumbling. He returned with the salad. Again he dished out six portions.

"You know, this is Skoaland's salad dressing recipe. I picked up a few things from my friends. Need a good garlic press and it turns our terrific. What do you think?" His guest expressed satiated appreciation. "Isn't that good? Yeah, I should tell Arnie how good his dressing is but, well..." Zbyszko's lips quivered and he lowered his head to a forkful of lettuce.

"Hope you're hungry, made enough for an army." Zbyszko vanished and re-entered the finely furnished living room with a platter overflowing

with kielbasa.

"Hope you're hungry, sure made a lot." Zbyszko dished out six portions, adding an extra lump at the empty chair two seat from his guest. Zbyszko followed his guest's stare and blushed. "Yeah, well, force of habit, uh, Bruno always sat there, you know what kind of appetite he has."

Silence was an unwelcome addition for the main course. Zbyszko ate quickly, occasionally glancing at the other chairs. Once, his guest thought he almost began to speak. But Zbyszko merely shook his head and brooded.

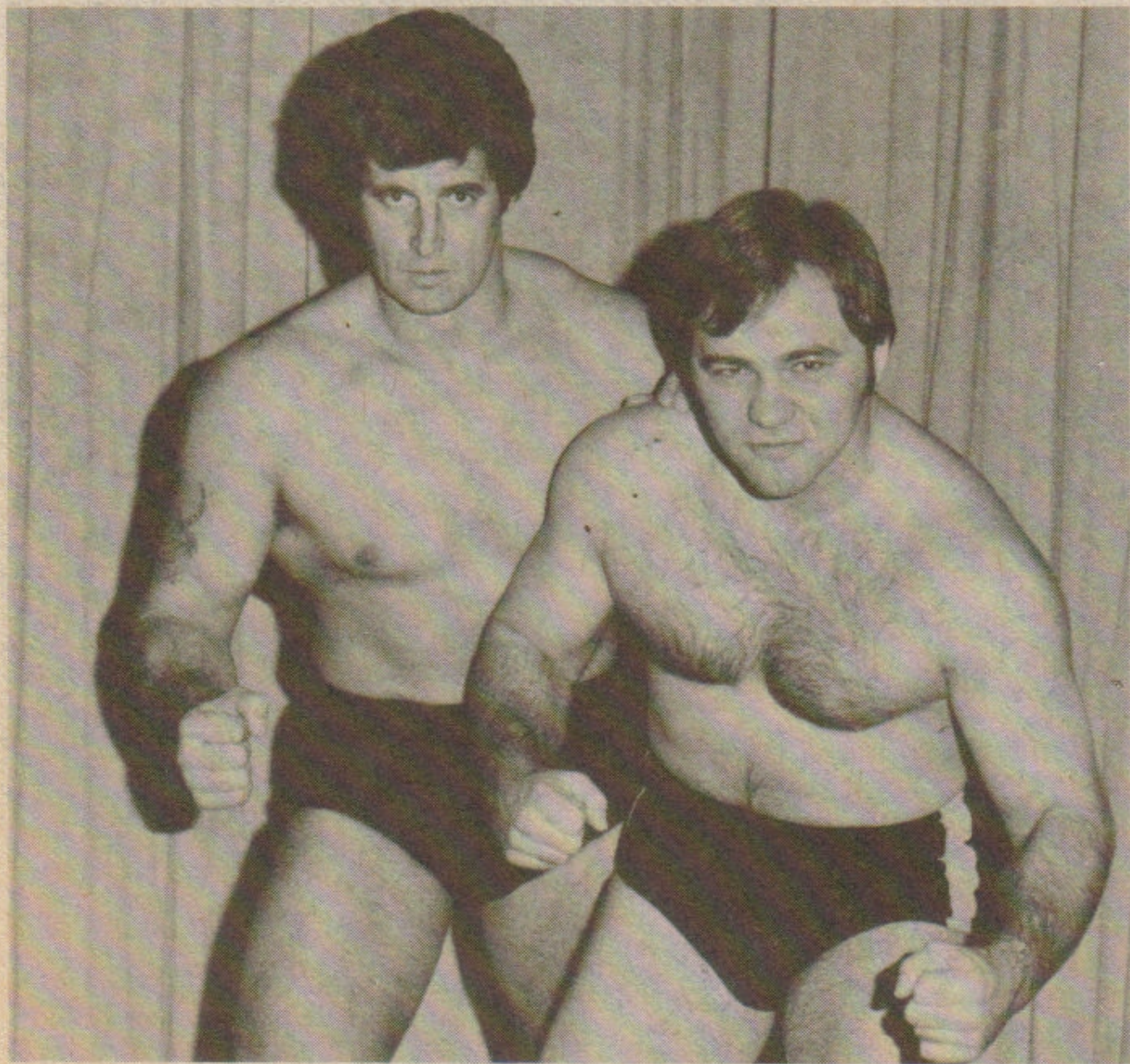
"Want more?" Zbyszko asked after his guest had a second helping. "Uh, don't think there's much, sorry, I'll cook up some more." Zbyszko was asked why he simply didn't take some food off the untouched plates. Larry purpled.

"Can't, never know when, uh, sure, maybe." Zbyszko forced himself to pluck a piece of kielbasa from a plate, his face straining with tension at the harsh acknowledgement of his loneliness. Fighting back tears, Zbyszko dropped the food into his visitor's plate and stumbled into the kitchen to put on the coffee.

Dessert was served in a small hutch overlooking the window. Larry didn't talk, though he broke his quiet eating by staring at the empty table.

"Used to eat in here when the dinner was over," Larry said softly. "Used to be able to fit everyone into this room. Now, now it's kinda easy. No problem with room when you're alone, huh?" Zbyszko rose, tottering slightly and pressed his face against the window.

"Why have all my friends turned against me?" He whispered to the mute trees and slender clouds fleeing his watery stare. □

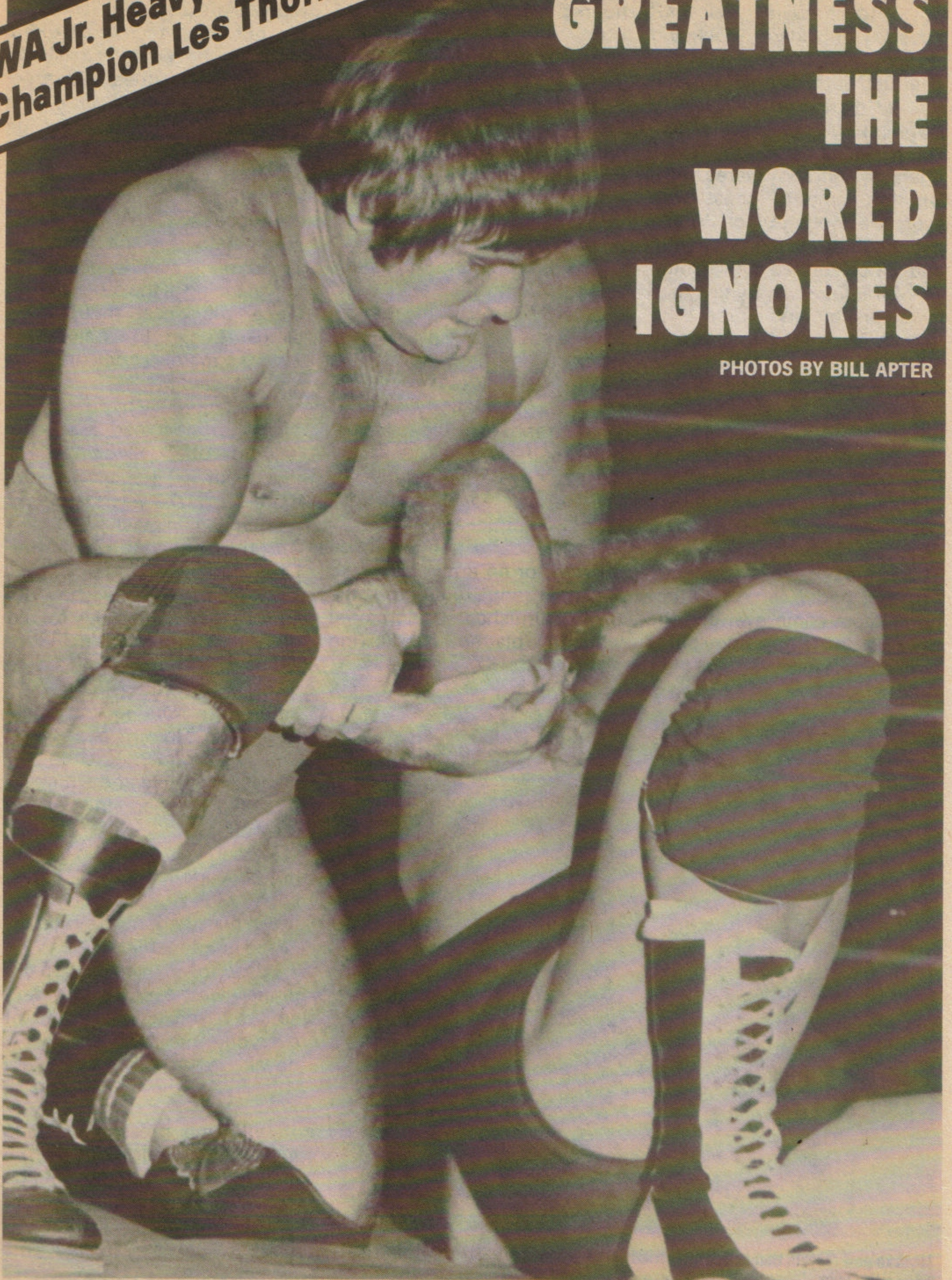


Zbyszko now reveals that he felt he carried Tony Garea's share of the load when the two were a tag team.

**NWA Jr. Heavyweight
Champion Les Thornton:**

GREATNESS THE WORLD IGNORES

PHOTOS BY BILL APTER



LES THORNTON PAUSED at the bus intersection of Lexington Avenue and 86th Street in New York City. He fumbled in his pocket for change and emerged with a quarter and a dime. Shrugging, Thornton strolled to the bus stop and boarded the Number 18 bus. The NWA Junior Heavyweight champion was on his way for a tour of Mayor Ed Koch's Gracie Mansion overlooking the East River.

Thornton dropped the 35 cents in the slot and started to walk to the rear.

"Hey, buddy," snapped the surly bus driver. "Cough up 'nother quarter."

Thornton found only lint in his

pocket. He unfolded a dollar bill from his wallet and handed it to the bus driver.

"What's this?" glared the driver.

"Would you kindly give me change, old chap?" asked Thornton.

"Listen buddy, you need exact change or get off the bus," shouted the driver.

"Don't you know who I am. I am Les Thornton, the NWA Junior Heavyweight champion," Thornton shouted in despair. He felt a heavy handbag lash into his back. Thornton whirled around and looked down the steps.

"Move it, you bum, or I'll break your nose," rasped an elderly woman in a pink chiffon dress.

Thornton has grown accustomed to such outbursts of non-recognition. Though he has wrestled all over the world and defended his prestigious title on numerous occasions, Thornton still fails to receive the just accolades a man of his stature and skills deserves. To many, Les Thornton remains the unknown champion.

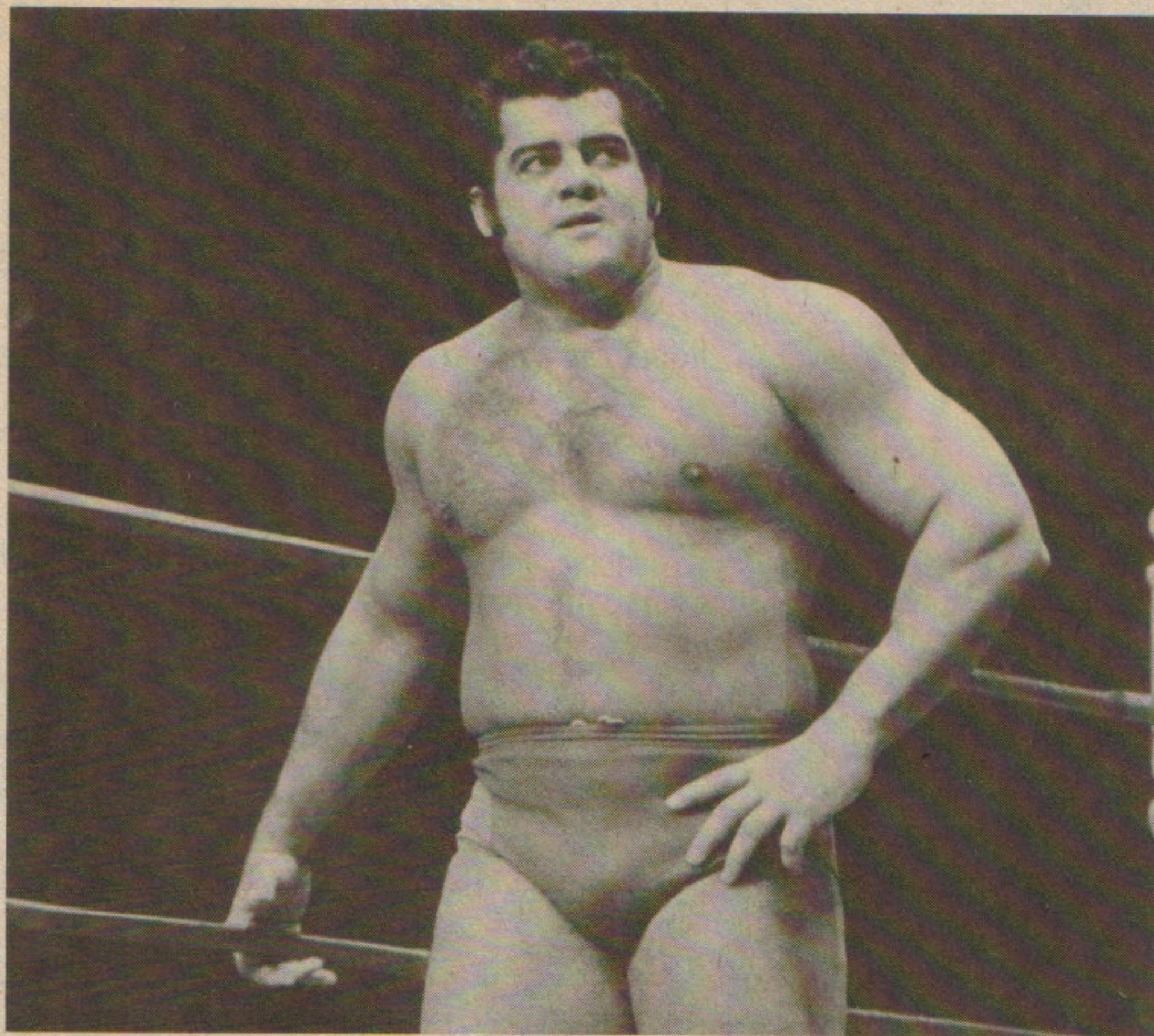
Initially, Thornton appeared undismayed by the lack of attention from both press and public. The British native believed recognition would come his way once he'd established himself as a legitimate champion capable of withstanding the onslaught of all challengers.



Thornton leaps high into the air to kneedrop a prostrate Mike Graham (above left). Les hiprolls Graham to the mat (above right).

How can the world possibly ignore a man of Les Thornton's abilities? The NWA Junior Heavyweight champion exhibits all the classic skills of a great wrestler, yet fails to receive his just accolades. No matter what Thornton does, he cannot gain his share of publicity. Many worry about the permanent psychological effects such a strain might inflict

PEDRO MORALES' CLAIM:



"THE WWF IS OUT OF CONTROL!"

NEARLY FIVE YEARS ago Pedro Morales wrestled his last big match in the WWF. It was in fabled Madison Square Garden and big, tough, surly Strong Kobayashi was the opponent. Despite their considerable antipathy and Kobayashi's marked inclination toward violence, the bout maintained a tough, albeit clean atmosphere. Both men bounced each other off the ropes, but there was no foreign

objects introduced, no eye-gouging, no groin-kneeing, nor did either seek to permanently disable the other. In sum, it was the sort of match Pedro Morales, former WWF champion, had grown accustomed to fighting.

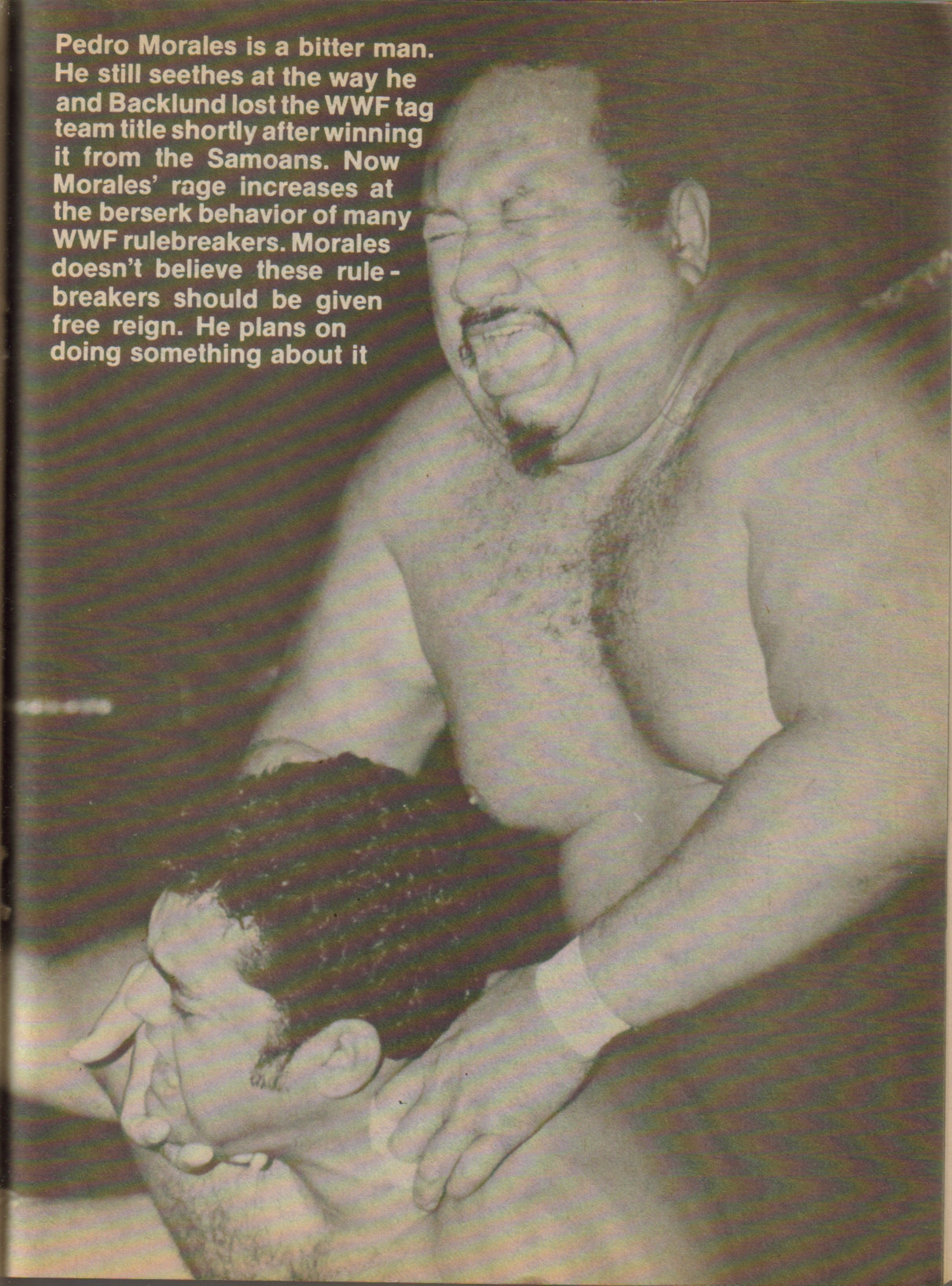
Things have changed since that final match. Wrestlers have come and gone. A new champion reigns. But Morales always thought that the nature of the sport would remain

unaltered. He was wrong and received a jarring lesson in his first big match in the WWF against the madman of the East, Tor Kamata.

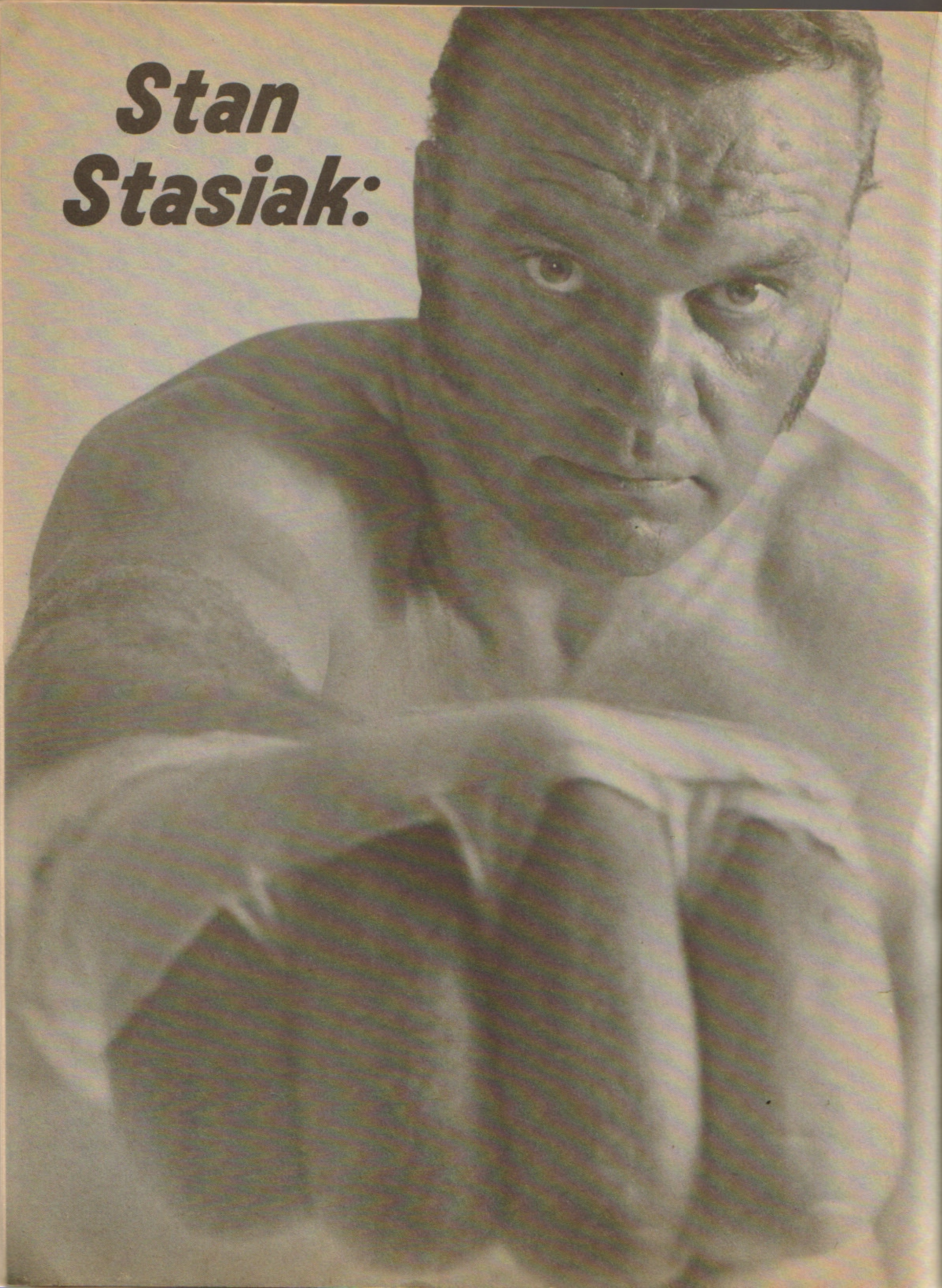
"What kind of garbage is that anyway?" snarled Morales as he stormed about his locker room, his forehead bandaged. "I thought wrestling was civilized. I was very wrong. WWF wrestling has turned into a jungle sport since I left."

(Continued on page 52)

Pedro Morales is a bitter man. He still seethes at the way he and Backlund lost the WWF tag team title shortly after winning it from the Samoans. Now Morales' rage increases at the berserk behavior of many WWF rulebreakers. Morales doesn't believe these rule-breakers should be given free reign. He plans on doing something about it



***Stan
Stasiak:***



BRASS KNUCKS, COLD HEART

Pure and simple, Stan Stasiak can be a mean man. Down in Texas, where Stasiak defends his Texas Brass Knuckles championship, a line forms eager to take him on and shut his mouth. Stasiak's had his share of feuds, but he may have pushed Jose Lothario a little too far

PHOTOS BY JIM CALDWELL

FOR ALMOST EIGHT months out of the year, rain pours with unrelenting consistency upon the Pacific Northwest. Many people are driven mad by the unceasing downpour. Others flee the area for sunnier locations. Some find reassurance in the predictability of the weather.

Stan Stasiak is such a man.

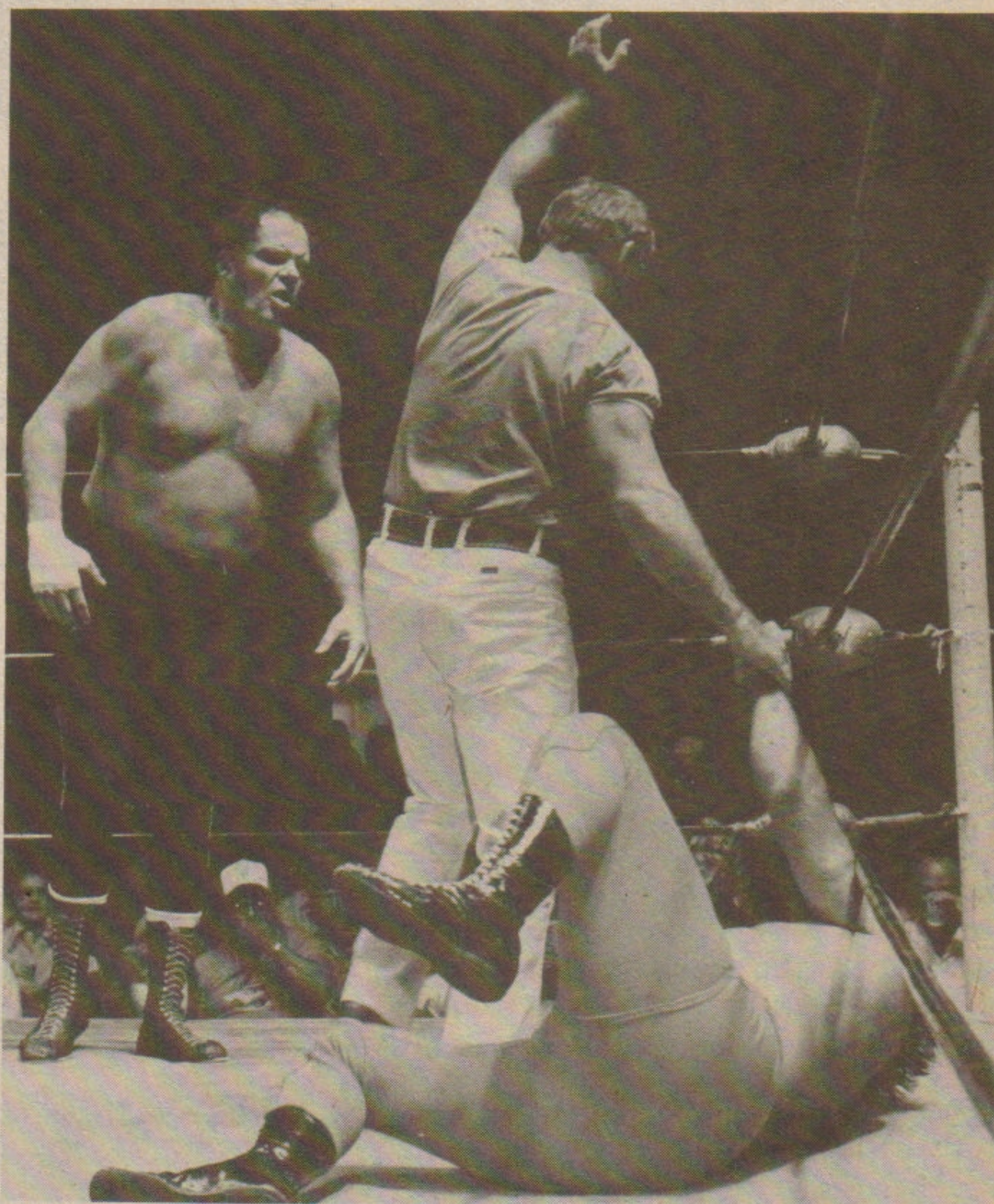
"I love Seattle weather, heck, I love this town," remarked Stasiak. "Everytime I wrestle in Seattle, I feel like a million bucks."

Once Stasiak leaves the area, a sinister transformation overwhelms him. Gone is the quick, engaging smile. Gone are the friendly waves to the cheering crowds. Gone is the gentlemanly, albeit hard-nosed wrestling style.

As soon as Stasiak defends his Texas Brass Knuckles title, he's a different person, something he emphatically denies.

"I'm the same," declared Stasiak. "But there's a bunch of creeps down in Texas lookin' to cheap-shot me and whack me across the skull with all manner of weapons. Now I'm talkin' about them snivelin' brats the Von Erichs and I'm talkin' about that outta shape idiot Mil Mascaras."

Still, Stasiak's actions contradict his words. True to the title's description, Stasiak has resorted to brawling tactics in each of his defenses.



The referee orders Stasiak to retreat to a neutral corner before he will begin a count on the fallen Jose Lothario. Something about the Texas weather has brought out Stan's most vicious traits.

"That Stasiak's a real stinker," shouted Bruiser Brodie, a prime contender for the Texas Brass Knuckles championship. "I used to

try and act like a gentleman with him. First time we met, I offered to shake his hand. Rotten parasite
(Continued on page 56)

Bruno & Harley--

WE MEET AGAIN



In no uncertain terms, Harley Race tells Bruno "no comment" (above). Bruno battles the NWA champion Race in June, 1973 (right).

So two of wrestling's superstars meet again. Last time Bruno Sammartino and Harley Race met, their bout was brutal. Now they meet again. Despite the anger and despite the intense rivalry, a peculiar sort of respect exists between these two giants

SO MUCH HAD happened since they'd last met. Both had been champions, one still holds the crown. Each is assured an honored place in the annals of wrestling history. So much has happened, so much time had passed, yet each remembers the meeting.

Bruno Sammartino was traveling the country. It was

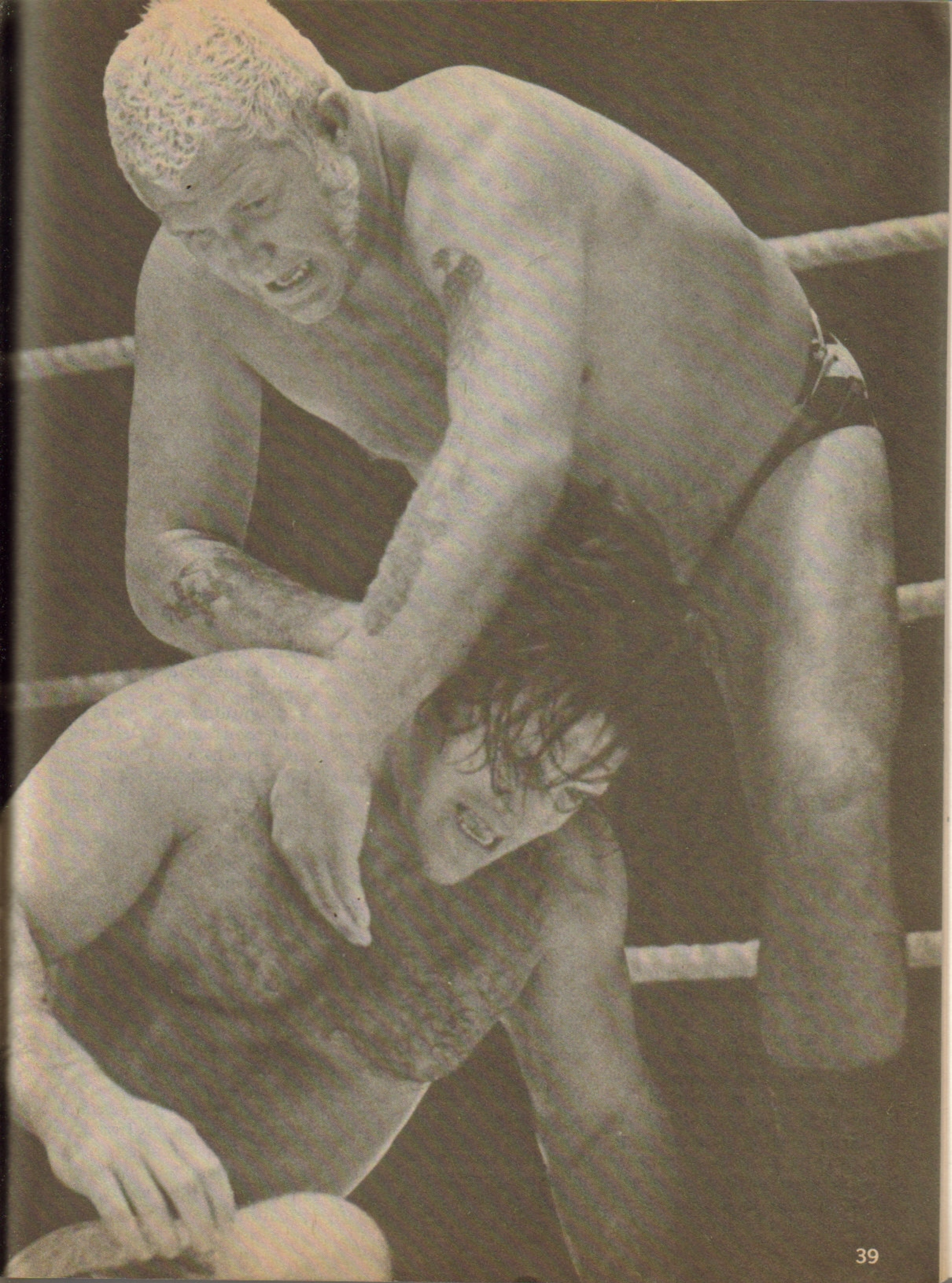
during the few years between his WWF title reigns. Then newly crowned NWA champion Harley Race, a recent victor over Dory Funk Jr., accepted Bruno's challenge. The two men battled brilliantly. Many call it the best match in NWA history. It was tied at one fall each when the time limit ran out.

Harley Race remained

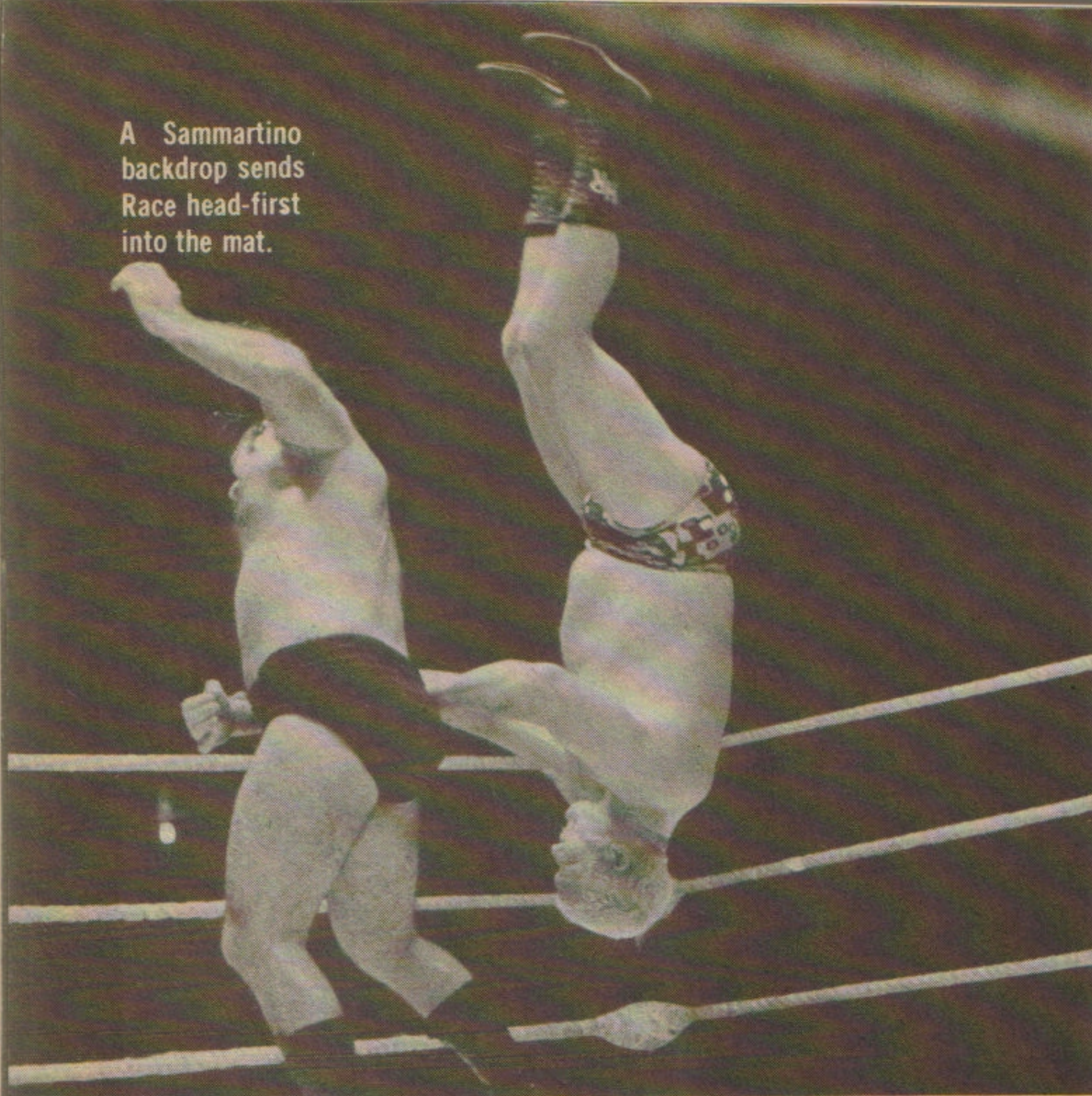
champion.

When asked about their greatest matches, each man recalls that bout as one of his five best. If either man had won the match, he probably would have considered it his greatest moment in wrestling. Both are too proud to count a draw as his best.

People assumed their match would quickly be



A Sammartino backdrop sends Race head-first into the mat.



followed by a rematch. Before that could happen, Harley lost his title to Jack Brisco. Bruno went off to other commitments. Their paths never crossed again. Until now.

In the years between, Bruno had regained and lost the WWF title. Harley regained the NWA title and holds it to this day. Race signed to wrestle Bob Backlund, current WWF champion. Bruno, a WWF mainstay, not only wrestles but does commentary on the WWF television broadcasts. Their paths had to cross.

Cross they did. Race was to give a television interview. Who better than Bruno to ask him the right questions?

Maybe that's what scared Harley. When Bruno approached him, Harley walked away without a word. This crude insult confused rather than bothered Bruno.

What was the reason behind it?

No one could figure it out. Harley did it on television; millions saw. Usually, Harley loves to confront his enemies. To walk away silently isn't like him.

Reporters rushed to Harley's dressing room. There, he did to them what he'd earlier done to Bruno. Harley walked past them into the parking lot and drove off. Everyone was stunned.

Bruno joined the reporters. He asked if Harley had explained his conduct. When told that Harley had left without comment, Bruno nodded.

"Though we only met once," Bruno said, "we know each other too well. A great wrestling match is something like an intense conversation. Everything about a human being is revealed. It's like sitting in a room with

someone for a week and just talking. A lot would get said in that week. Some of it you wouldn't want repeated.

"Harley was afraid I'd know too much. He doesn't want to give away any of his secrets to Backlund. He didn't want me to give them away, either.

"People ask me all the time if I want to wrestle Race again. They say, 'Bruno, I bet you want to show him you're better than him.' I learned everything interesting about Harley the first time. If we wrestled again, we'd just be repeating ourselves.

"This is not to say I wouldn't wrestle Harley if he challenged me. It would be a great match. But it wouldn't have the excitement of the first match. I don't think anything could equal the excitement of that."

Bruno was asked if he'd walk away if Harley had gone to interview him. Bruno smiled.

"I wouldn't walk away," he said, then added, "but I might not give him very straightforward answers. No, I don't think I'd be frank with him at all."

Has Bruno told Backlund about Race?

"Bob has asked me some questions," Bruno replied, "and I've answered them. I haven't worked closely with Bob because I don't think he needs me. He can take care of himself. Harley has every right to be worried."

Does that mean Bruno thinks Backlund would defeat Race?

"Anyone who predicts what will happen when two great champions wrestle," Bruno said, "doesn't know what he's talking about. It could go either way." □

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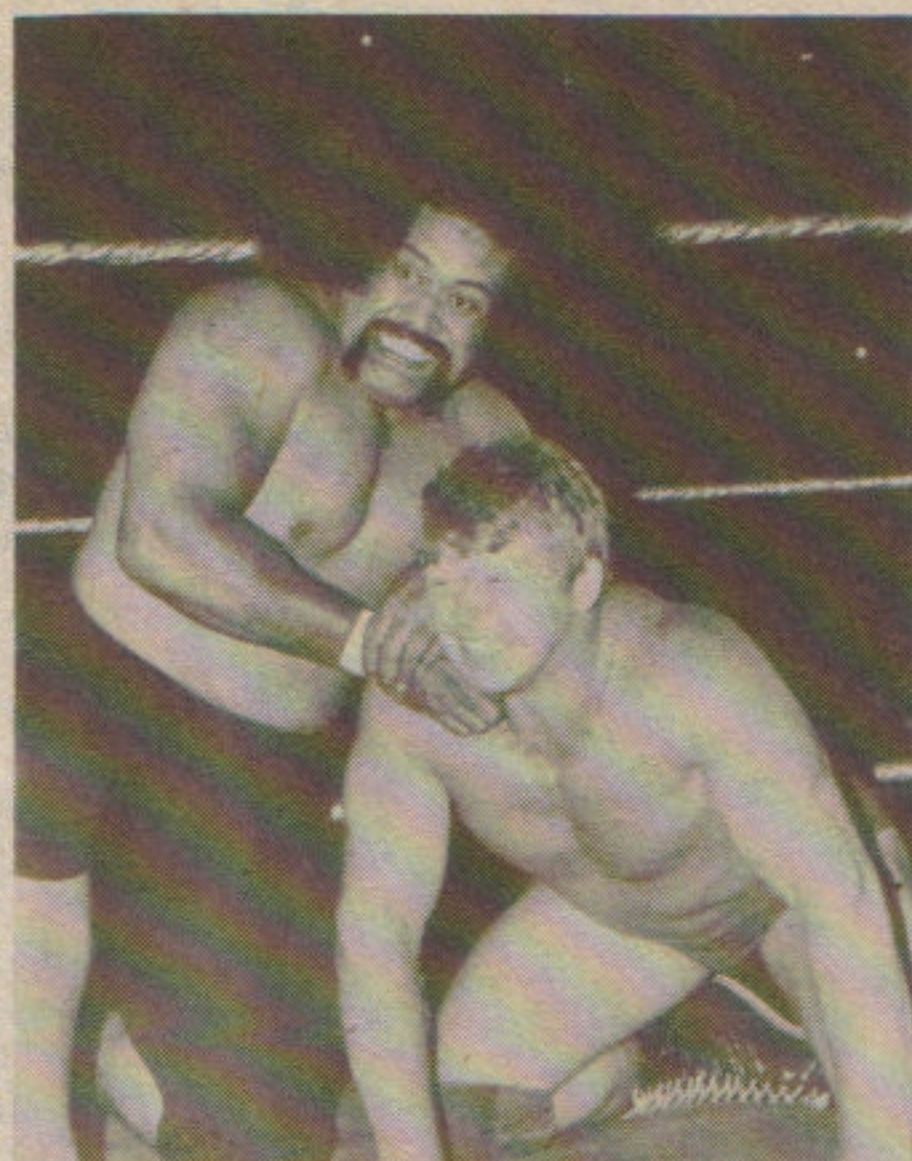
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The Inquiring Reporter

(Continued from Page 10)



Samoan #1 applies a nerve hold on Bob Backlund. This kind of move should be outlawed, according to Gillian Rogers.

Nerve holds have nothing to do with wrestling."

Mike Collins, Venice, CA: "I don't think matches should have time limits. That way, every match would have a winner or loser. A clock is an artificial way of deciding things.



Rick Steamboat's chance to win the NWA title from Harley Race was taken away by the clock. Mike Collins feels this is wrong.

I've seen wrestlers look to see how much time they have left. Then they go for the draw. Maybe that will mean fewer matches on a card, but the ones that are there will be battles to the finish." ☐

THE TATTTLER

(Continued from Page 8)

inherited," laughed Tommy. "Really, I'd be proud to go watch Eddie wrestle if he weren't my son. He's got a lot of ability and, more importantly, works very hard. I've seen a lot of kids come and go with a lot of talent, and a good percentage of them squander their skills by laziness or lack of fire in the gut.

"But Eddie really wants to be a success. And I've gotta admit, he's shown his old man a few things. I tell ya, that made me real happy. Shows he's always out there thinking and trying to better himself," said Tommy. "Just like his dear old Dad."

—Randy Swift

TOKYO, JAPAN—A succession of startling events shook the entire wrestling world with all the unbelievable action swirling within the walls of the Saga Sports Center.

NWA champion Harley Race squared off against old nemesis Baba the Giant, confident he'd dispose of the Oriental grappler in record time.

"Baba can't stand pain. Once I clobber the big stiff with my favorite blow, he'll fall down and slither back into his hole," predicted Race.

Falser words were never spoken. To the delight of the near-delirious crowd, Baba shocked Race and captured the NWA title.

"I am very happy to be champion," said Baba. "I promise a long and dignified reign as NWA champion."

That was Baba's opportunity to be off-base in a prediction. Several days later at Otsu, Race, more subdued, a bit grim,



HARLEY RACE

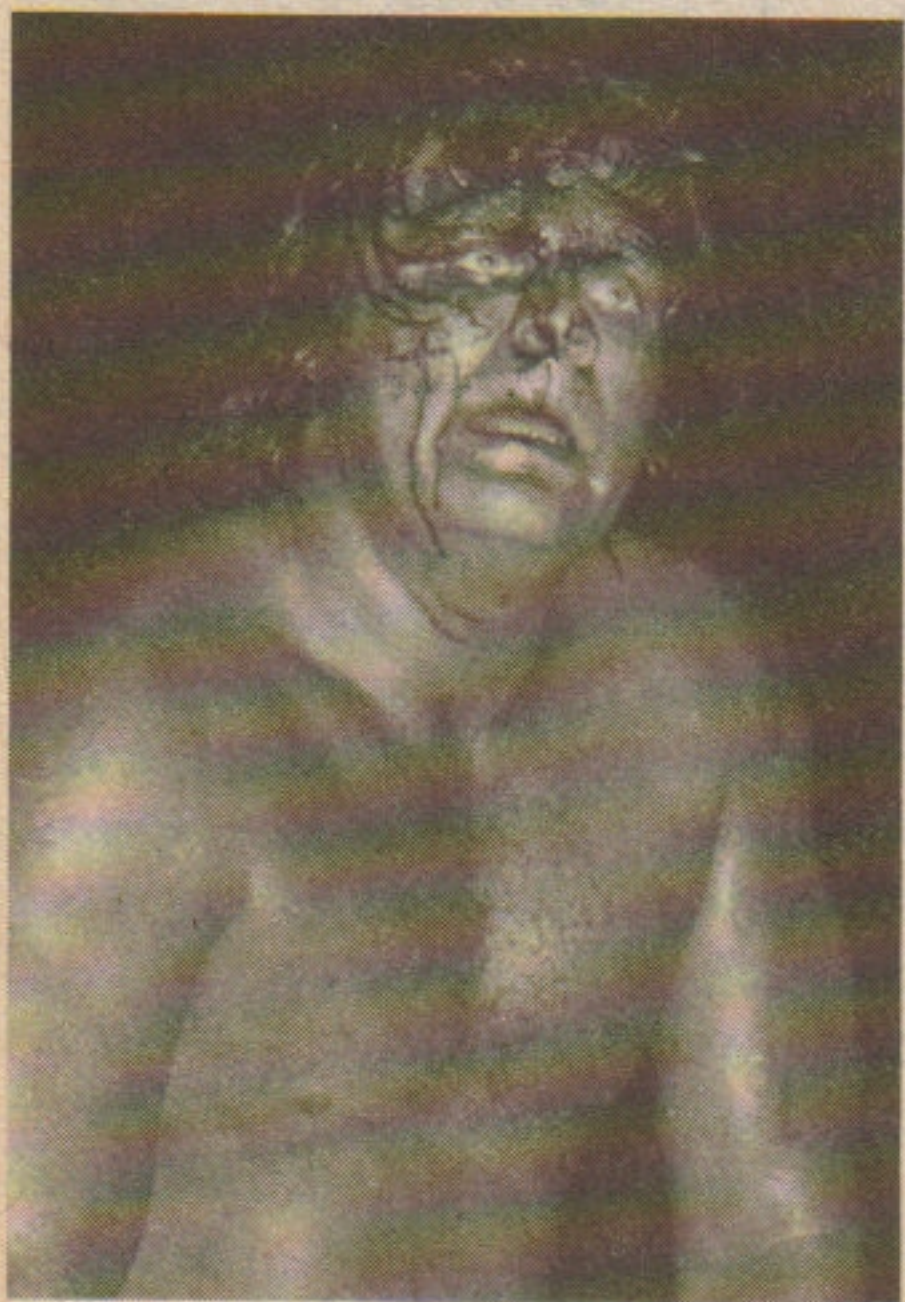
launched an all-out attack to regain the belt. In one of his finest hours, Race regained the belt to become a five-time NWA champion.

"Damn straight I'm happy," was Race's only response.

—*Masanori Murakami*

MIAAMI, FL—Dick Slater has it. Dusty Rhodes wants it. Talk about ambition!

"So Dusty wants it, huh?" said Slater. "So he thinks he's good enough to get it. Hah, that makes me laugh. Guy couldn't



DICK SLATER

get it if he wanted it bad enough to get on his hands and knees.

"Look how long he's tried to get it. He'll never get it," said Slater, laughing.

"I'm gonna get it one of these days," vowed Rhodes. "One of these days Slater's gonna trip up and he'll lose it to me. Then I'm gonna invite him to wrestle me, and, when I finish with his ugly kisser, I'm gonna wrap it around his throat and drag his fat carcass outta the arena and dump him in the alley, where he

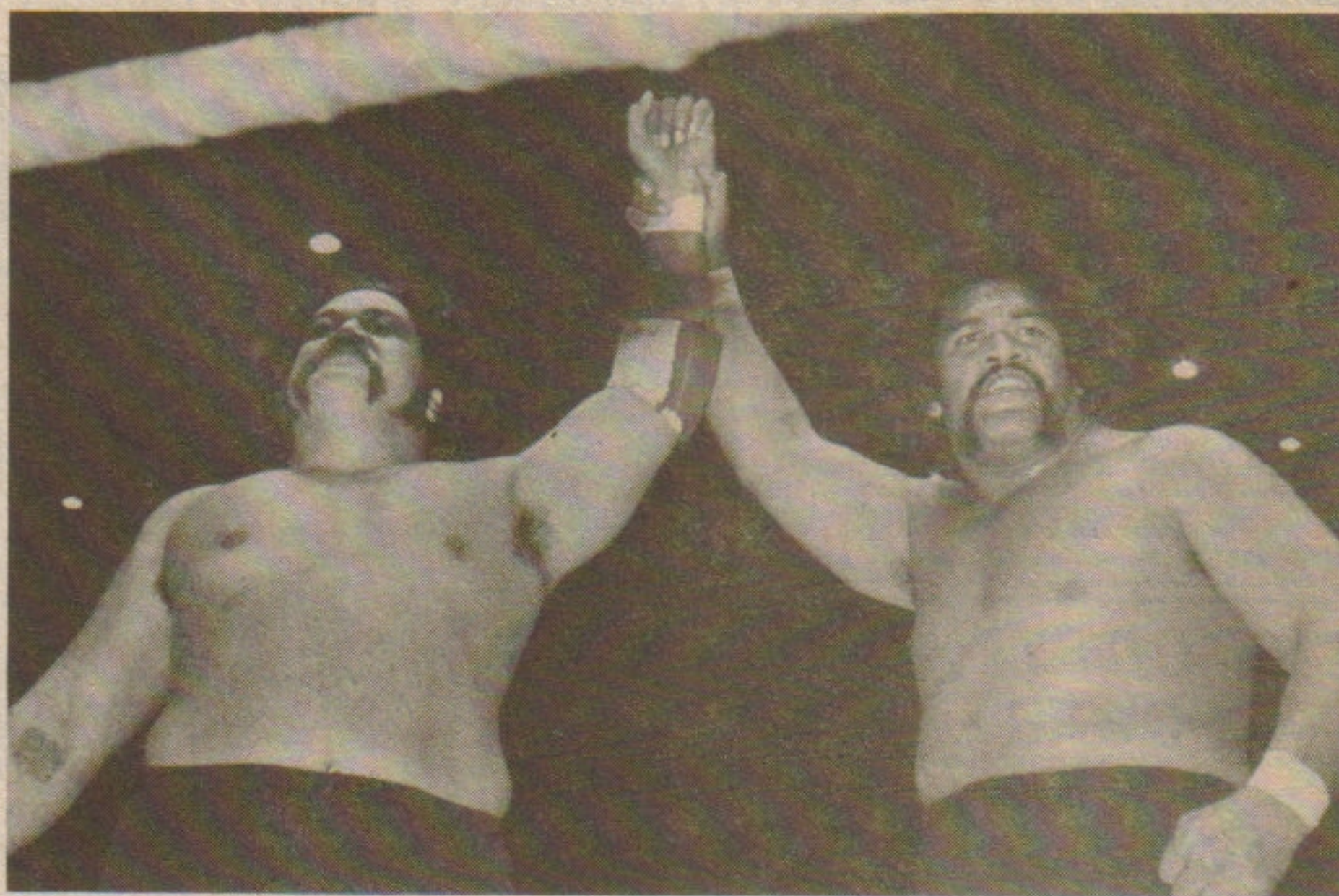
Brodie of the Texas Brass Knuckles champion. "Stasiak can but he can't hide. It's all over for him once he stops runnin' and starts fightin' like a man."

Stasiak's response?

"Is Brodie still wrestlin'? I thought he was lookin' for a job he was good at."

—*Virginia W. Sloan*

ALLENTOWN, PA—Just when the wrestling world was ready to write The



THE SAMOANS

came from and where he belongs."

Oh, by the way, you might be wondering what It is. The Southern Heavyweight title. Yes, Slater's got it and Rhodes wants it.

—*Myron Roth*

DALLAS, TX—Hear ye, hear ye, Bruiser Brodie has declared war. Hide the women and children. Store up on provisions. Lock your doors and shutter your windows. Bruiser won't rest until he's defeated Stan Stasiak.

"I am gonna bounce that boob all over this state and fling him into the Gulf," shouted

Samoans' obituary, the brutal beasts from the mysterious jungles rose up and won the WWF tag team elimination tournament.

In a wild match, Afa and Sika, urged on by manager Captain Lou Albano, upended the team of Tony Garea and Rene Goulet before a shocked audience.

"Let this be the last time anyone ever says anything bad about my boys or me. We're the greatest, I've told the world that, I'm tired of telling the world that, listen to me, I'm the greatest, I'm the champion, understand?" shouted a joyous Albano.

—*Paul Dreiser* □

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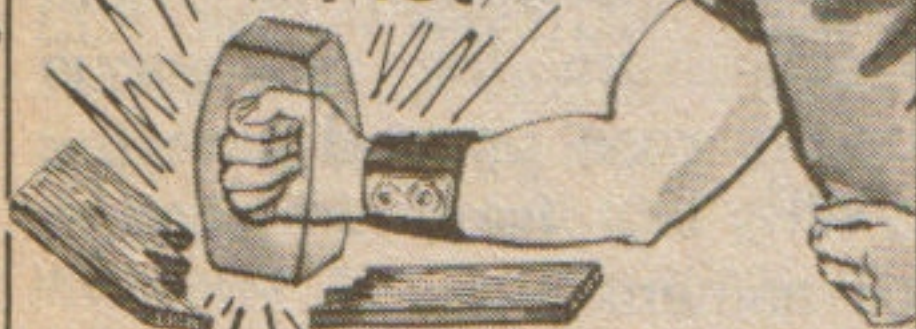
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GREATNESS THE WORLD IGNORES

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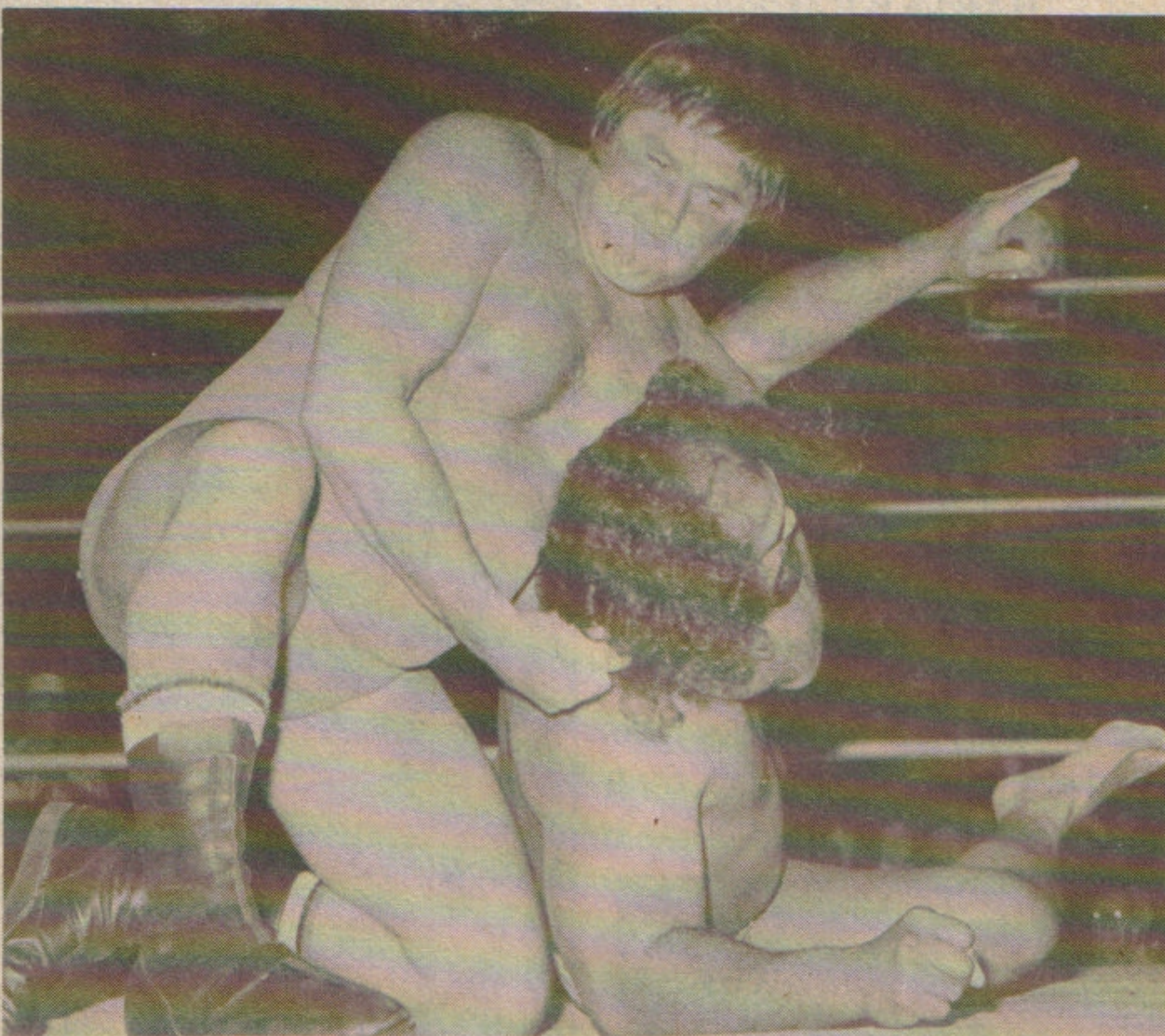
"I think I have shown my talents and demonstrated I can whip anyone around," insisted Thornton. "When I wrestled Mike Graham in Florida, I truly believed that would have the effect of establishing myself in the public mind as a real, outstanding champion. But I guess I was wrong."

Years ago, Thornton and Tony Rocco had a savage feud out in California. Though Thornton

against a wide variety of wrestlers and against Sweet Brown Sugar, among others, in Texas.

"Has there ever been a man I have refused to wrestle?" asked Thornton, spreading his palms upward in amazement. "No, I have met everyone. What more can I do?"

Right now, Thornton seems determined to take on Tatsumi Fujinami, reigning WWF junior Heavyweight champion.



Thornton headlocks Reno Tuufuli (above) and tests his strength against Tony Rocco (opposite right). The man he wants most is Tatsumi Fujinami, the reigning WWF Junior Heavyweight champ.

came out the better in most of the matches, he still felt slighted.

"They wrote a lot about Rocco and not much about me," said Thornton, sighing. "I showed what I could do. I've never shrank from anyone or any challenge. I have been a champion in the truest sense of the word and defended my belt with honor in many, many areas."

Not only has Thornton wrestled in Florida and abroad, he has fought in the Mid-Atlantic area

"He's the one I want," said Thornton, his handsome features convolving into a frown. "He's been ducking me and trying his very best to avoid a confrontation all the world demands. I know he cannot continue to elude me. He must stand up and fight me eventually."

Instead, Thornton took on Jose Estrada at Madison Square Garden in a match with particular significance. Estrada is the former

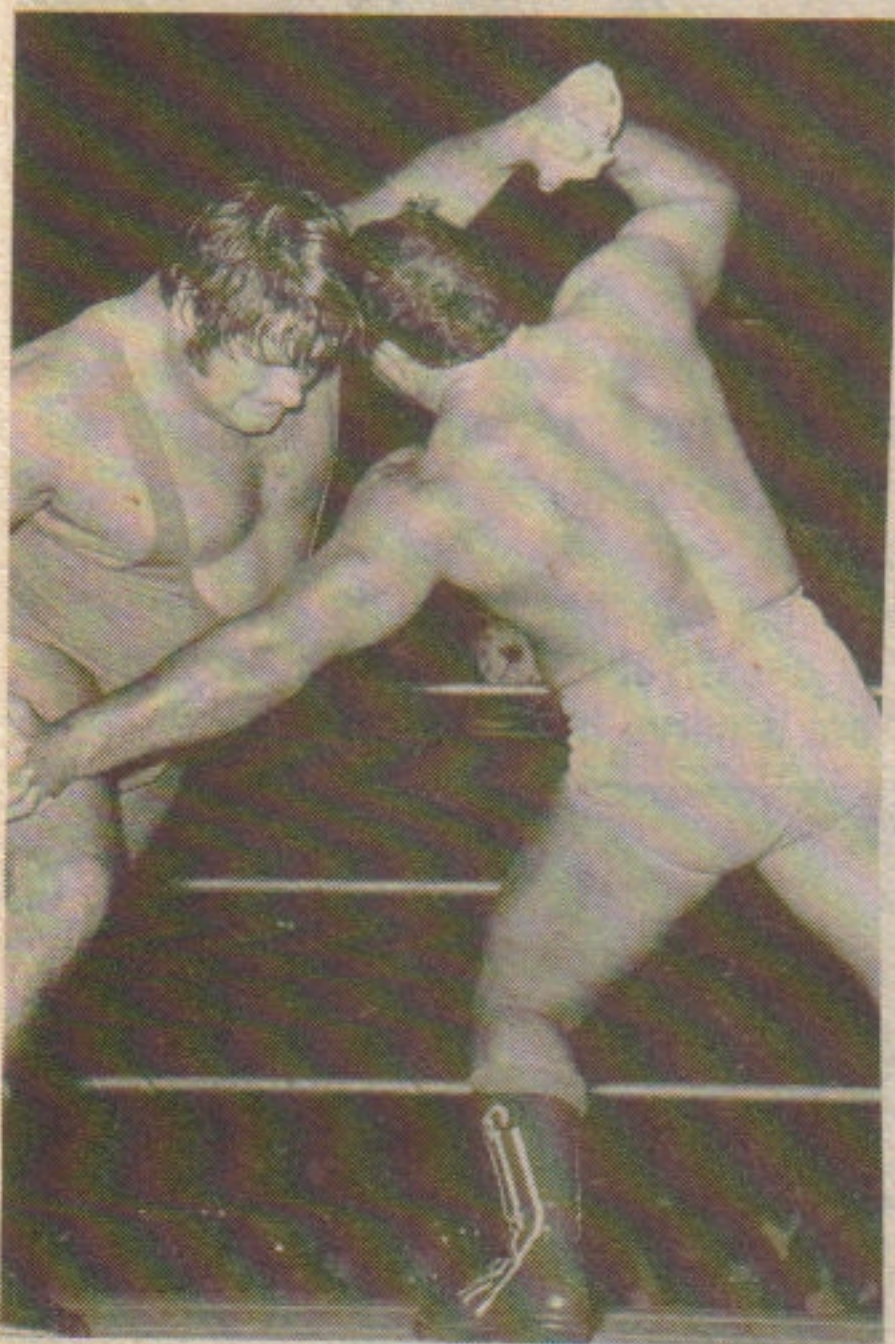
WWF Junior Heavyweight champion and lost the belt to Fujinami.

"Yes, I think it meant a lot to beat Estrada," said Thornton.

The match delighted the capacity crowd. It was quick-paced, brilliant action with dazzling maneuvers on both sides of the ring. In particular, the Garden crowd took a liking to Thornton.

"Oh, you always love to hear the cheers," said Thornton.

He heard more than that. Garden wrestling fans are among the most sophisticated, knowledgeable fans in the whole world. They



know a stiff when they see one and they recognize ability as well. From all the fans polled after the match came a unanimous remark: Les Thornton is one talented wrestler.

"I love the Garden fans. They know their wrestling, that's for certain," said Thornton. "It means a lot when fans who know their sport cheer and appreciate you. I was very pleased with my reaction and my performance against Estrada. Now that I've defeated the former Junior Heavyweight champion, don't you think the current one should give me a shot?"

And when that match does occur, Les Thornton may become a household name. □

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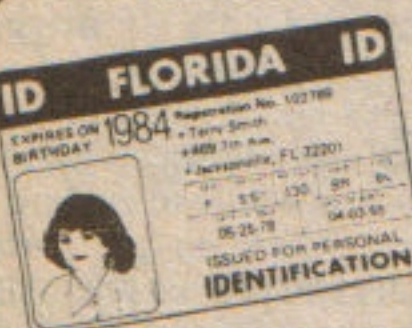
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PEDRO MORALES

(Continued from Page 35)

As usual, Morales conducted himself with dignity and respect. He entered the arena to the joyous cheers of the huge crowd. Tor Kamata waddled down the aisle, sneering and snaring at the booing fans.

"I knew he was a mean man and I do not especially like him," said Morales. "But there is a way to wrestle and there is a way not to wrestle."

Even before the bell, Kamata rushed Morales and dug his fingers into Morales' eyes. Morales reeled back, stunned.

"I could not believe anyone would do such a thing to me," said Morales.

Repeatedly Kamata resorted to mindless violence. He seemed to possess an infinite array of illegal maneuvers, all refined and honed by his sadistic Oriental training.

First, Kamata plucked a thin metallic object from his trunks. Morales never saw it. Nor was he looking for such an insidious trick.

"I wrestle by the rules and do not think or anticipate my foe will do something like bring a foreign object into the ring," said Morales.

Kamata slashed away, bloodying Morales. The handsome wrestler staggered back against the ropes, blinded by his own blood.

"I cannot see. What can I do."

Kamata exploited the advantage by pounding away with both fists and both feet, almost bringing Morales to his knees.

"Then I got angry," said Pedro.

Gasping, Morales fought back. After a particularly brutal period, Morales regained the momentum and seized control of the match. But the manner in



Former champion Pedro Morales does not approve of recent trends in the WWF. Pedro does not mind a brawl, but he cannot condone cheap, dirty tactics. Morales punches a bloody Tor Kamata in the chest (above) and looks for escape from a nerve hold (below).



which Morales regained the tempo was distinctly unnatural. He wasn't wrestling like Morales but like his opponent, returning punch for punch as the match degenerated into a total bloodbath.

"Maybe that's what I have to

do," said Morales, wincing as the doctor sewed stitches into his head. "Maybe this is what has happened to the WWF. To me, it seems the WWF is out of control!"

Morales is certainly not naive nor above brawling. What distresses him is the way rule-breakers appear to have gained the upper hand in the area he loves so much.

"Look at tht bunch of managers, Albano, Wizard, and Blassie. They outnumber Skoaland three-to-one and they bring in the worst and meanest men to wrestle. I have never seen anyone as wild and brutal as The Samoans. What Wizard and Albano did to Pat Patterson was a disgrace. This Hangman is a maniac. Hulk Hogan is cruel and should be banned. Suddenly, it seems all the rulebreakers are surrounding us.

"But the worst has to be that Ken Patera. Oh, how I hate him. I want his hide for all the things he calls me and all the things he says about my wrestling. One thing I cannot tolerate is a man who disgraces a title.

"When I was champion, I was very, very proud to be champion of all the people. I wore that belt with respect, for I respected my fans. But Patera does not respect his fans. He is Inter-Continental champion and he spits on his fans. I cannot take that. I will have to show him how a champion must act. Then he will show how a champion will lose when I take his belt.

"Yes, you can be champion and still respect your opponent and the people. Bruno Sammartino always did it and now Bob Backlund does it. I think Ken Patera must be taught a lesson. Tell him Pedro Morales is ready for him. And tell him he better be ready to lose his belt because I am going to get him."

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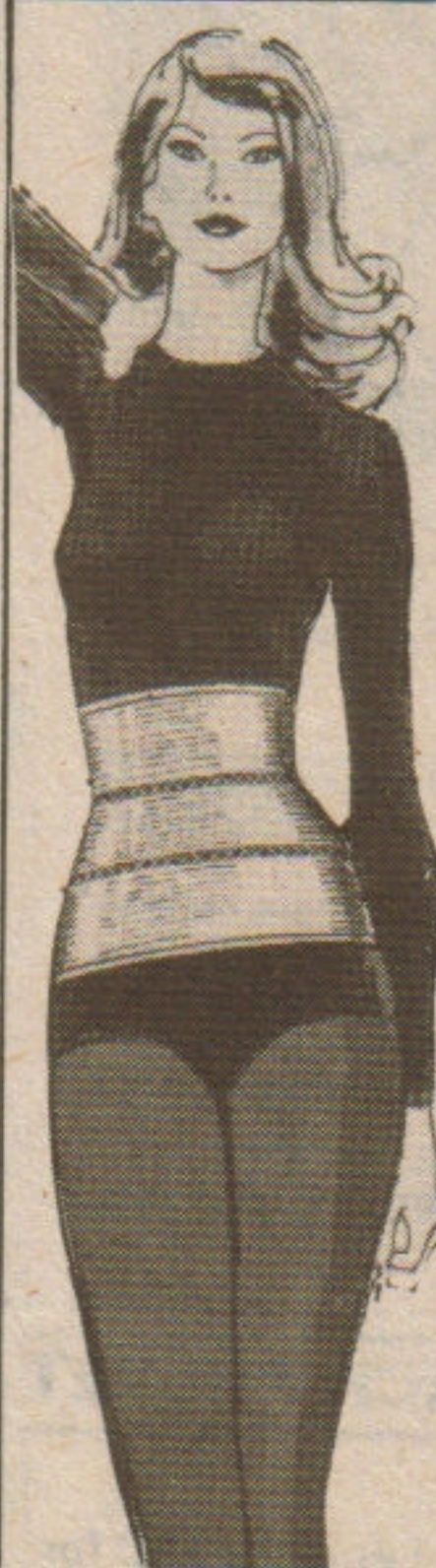
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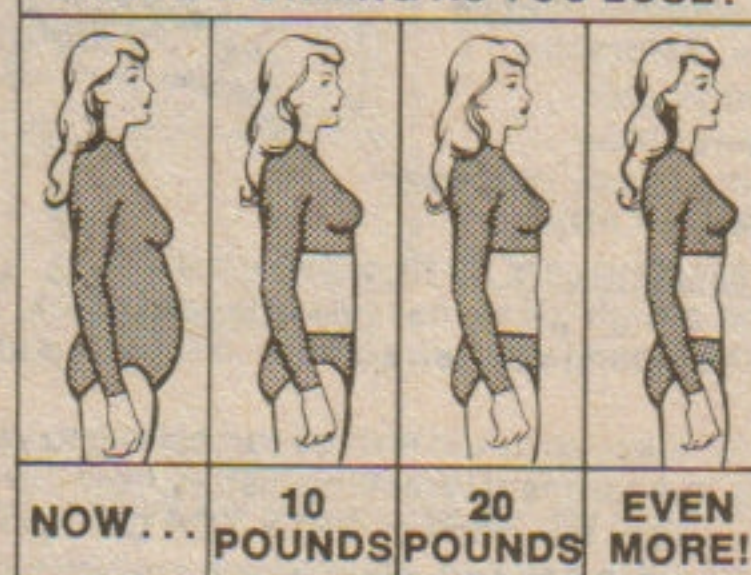
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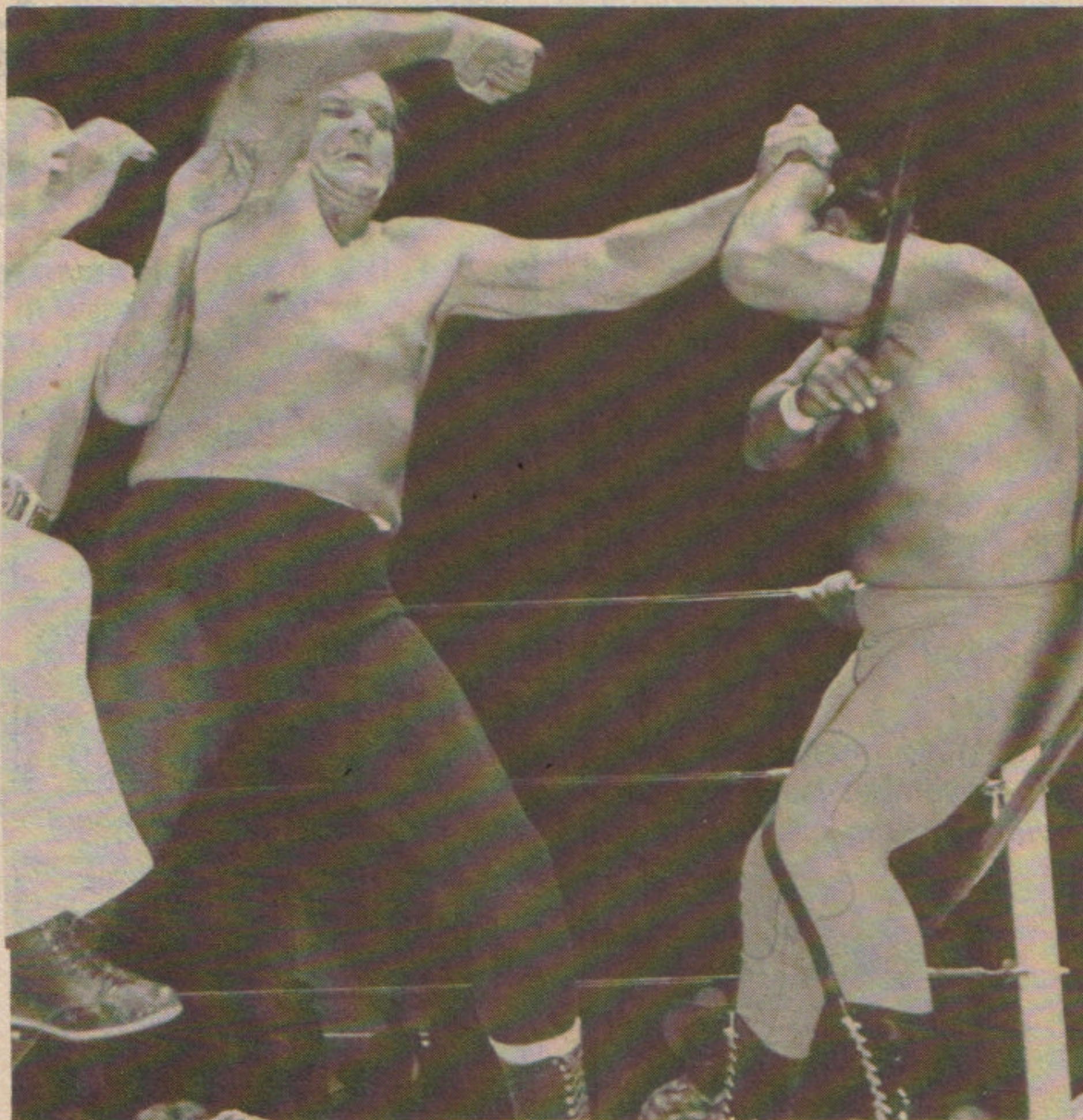
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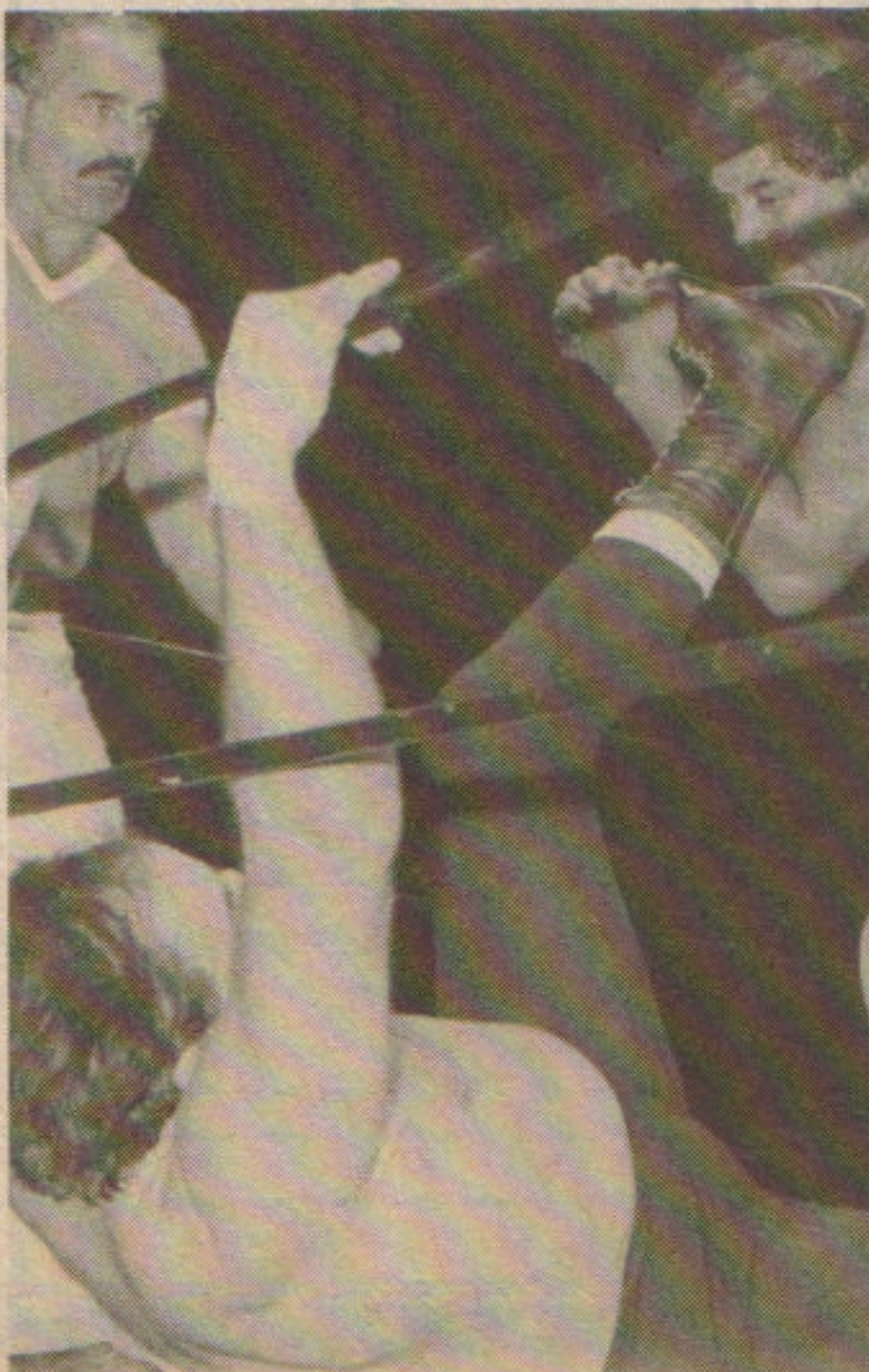
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Stan Stasiak

(Continued from Page 37)



Stasiak throws an illegal heartpunch as Lothario is tangled in the ropes (above). Jose twists Stasiak's ankle, trying to pull him away from the ropes (below).



smacked me across the face with the back of his hand. I don't take that from nobody. That guy wants to play rough, he better be prepared to take a real beating."

Brodie's angered threats are echoed throughout the state. All the Von Erich brothers, David, Kevin, and Kerry, have grown accustomed to attacks. But Stasiak's brutal tactics are more than they're used to.

"None of us are naive," said David. "We've had our fair share of rulebreakers launching holy wars against us, and we've handled it pretty well. But Stasiak doesn't have a heart. I mean, he doesn't have an ounce of heart in his gut."

Wrestling schizophrenia is certainly not a new phenomenon. Many wrestlers find a change of scenery emotionally wrenching. But Stasiak goes even further, wrestling with a vengeance at

times frightening.

"He seems to want to kill people," observed Kevin Von Erich. "He has a chip on his shoulder the size of the Rocky Mountains. I look forward to swatting the chip right into his pea-sized brain."

Stasiak's senseless violence provokes an equally violent backlash from one of Texas' favorites, Jose Lothario.

Lothario is a kind, sensitive man. Beneath the warm exterior throbs emotion always on the verge of violence. Lothario has a long fuse. But watch out when it ignites.

"Lothario?" Stasiak chuckled with contempt. "I wouldn't rate him a contender, 'cept maybe sweeping floors after the match. Lothario isn't a wrestler but a punching bag. He's good to practice on. I don't know if I'd even consider him a human being, much less a wrestler. Though from what I've seen of some Texas wrestlers, many of 'em don't even qualify for humans. Lotta backwards wrestlers around here."

"I heard Lothario can't even tie his own shoes. How does he ever expect to survive against me? I almost feel sorry for the guy."

Once Lothario heard Stasiak's comments, he flew into a rage. "The last thing I want is for Stasiak to feel sorry for me," he said. "There's a lesson to be learned here, and Stasiak is going to learn it. Can't wait to get my hands on him."

As usual, Stasiak insulted Lothario and immediately lashed into an illegal maneuver. But Lothario was more than ready. With dazzling precision, Jose bashed Stasiak from one end of the ring to the other. Since Stasiak's belt was on the line, he fought back like a wildman. The bout eventually ended in a double disqualification.

"Stasiak?" asked Lothario, mopping his brow. "He won't be champion for much longer." □

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